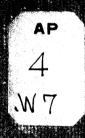


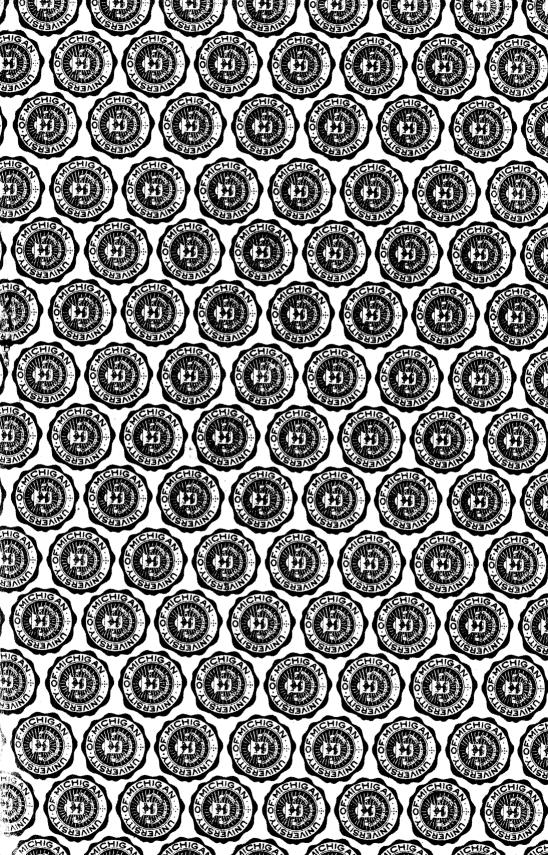
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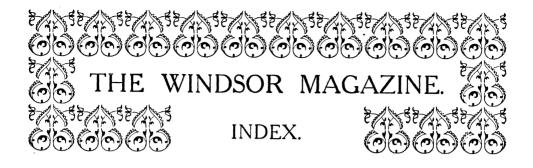
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Biographer of H.R.H. The Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, H.M. The Queen of Spain, etc.

I.

TOT long ago I shook hands with the Prince of Wales, at the end of a day that had been, like most days in his life, arduous in its variety of engagements. He looked fagged out, but this did not in any way diminish the heartiness of his handshake or the warmth of his welcome. After an early breakfast, the Prince had opened thirty or forty letters and dictated replies to his secretary. He had then motored to St. Pancras and journeyed to Birmingham. There he had visited an Exhibition, pausing to examine and comment on the contents of twenty stalls. He had lunched with the Lord Mayor and received many important citizens, saying a felicitous word to most of them. He had then motored from the city to visit an experimental farm which was being run in the interests of ex-Service He had chatted sympathetically with a dozen of the men, inquiring as to their war service and their former occupations.

Then, with his equerry on tenterhooks

as to the time schedule, the Prince had motored back to Birmingham, thanked the Chief Constable and other officials for their arrangements for his visit, and jumped, at the last moment, into the express for London. He travelled in an ordinary first-class carriage and very few of his fellow-passengers were aware that the train carried the Heir to the Throne.

Arriving in London about 6.45 p.m., he had motored to St. James's Palace, changed into evening dress, with the blue Order of the Garter, and precisely at five minutes to eight was inspecting a guard of honour mounted at the Guildhall. Ascending the staircase, he had forty people presented to him, and then headed the procession into the Guildhall, where he presided at a charity banquet. The speech he made was followed by the announcement that close upon £20,000 had been subscribed. Unhurried, after all the speeches were over, he asked for another song before leaving the Guildhall. His busy day was not yet over, for he had promised to

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[Vanduk.

AS EMPIRE AMBASSADOR.

attend a charity ball, and there until 2 a.m. he gratified half a dozen fair partners by his obvious pleasure in dancing.

When one remembers that this was just a sample of the daily strain on the Prince,

some idea may be gained of what his high position involves. Let it be added that he was alert throughout the whole of this heavy programme, and interpolated extra items during the day. Recently, when a very full schedule had been approved for a visit to Bournemouth, the Prince added, from sheer kindness of heart, half a dozen little events "off his own bat."

"Anyway, I am not an idle man," the Prince said to a friend when the talk had been on the pleasure-loving men and women in Society who shirked their responsibilities. I do not suppose there is anyone who could or would accuse the Prince of idleness.

As mention has been made of his speechmaking, I should like to explain how the Prince prepares his many speeches. A friend of mine, in conversation with Queen Mary, congratulated Her Majesty on the excellent speeches the Prince delivered, adding that they read as well as they were heard in public.

The Queen smiled with pleasure at this appreciation of her son's gift as a speaker, and added: "But, oh, the time he takes to prepare them!" If the Prince were not so careful in his preparation, the effect of his utterances would not be anything like so impressive as it is.

When His Royal Highness has consented to take part in some public function, he asks for full details as to the affair. With this material as the basis, he begins, with the help of his secretary, to draft his own speech, incorporating any facts which seem relevant to the occasion. That draft, however, undergoes many changes before it is typed finally for the Prince's use. Even on the final copy of the speech I have seen him add in pencil new sentences or allusions that occur to him just before rising to address his hearers.

The Prince has acquired a real gift of spontaneous speech. If anyone doubts his ability in this rare accomplishment, I wish they could have heard him at a meeting held in Drury Lane Theatre after the War in connection with a charitable scheme fostered by the Stage. On the platform were famous actors and actresses, including Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Gerald du Maurier, Mrs. Kendal, and others. One after another of these speakers addressed the crowded audience with the ease and elocution begotten of many years' experience.

By his own request, the Prince was about the tenth on the list of speakers, for, as he explained, he wished to hear all about the scheme before he rose. At last the audience were overjoyed to see the Prince rise to his feet and speak for the first time in his life in Drury Lane Theatre. I was near to the platform, but I saw no trace of notes in the Prince's hand, as, with consummate ease, he proceeded to weave the best points of all the preceding speakers into his own firstrate address. He would turn to Sir Arthur Pinero, and say how he agreed with something the dramatist had said, quoting most accurately. By the time he had spoken for a quarter of an hour he would have convinced any "doubting Thomas" who imagined he was dependent on previous preparation. As for elecution, no one that morning eclipsed the Prince in the distinctness with which every word was uttered.

When he is to broadcast, the Prince reads over and over again what he is going to say before he goes into the room with the microphone. That is why his speeches reach every ear so clearly and musically. Any awkward word has been eliminated, for the Prince hates long words, and tries to employ language which all the millions who are listening can understand. The result is that he and Mr. Baldwin divide the honours of being the best broadcaster

among our public men. The Prince could never manage such strenuous days if he were not in excellent physical condition. He believes in plenty of exercise, and often runs round the spacious grounds of Buckingham Palace before breakfast. He is keen on squash rackets, and, several years ago, found the King a formidable opponent. Lawn tennis has never fascinated him as it has the King, the Duke of York (who has played three times at Wimbledon), or Princess Mary, who used to enjoy a game with Mrs. Lambert Chambers, a former Lady Champion. is still fond of watching a cricket match, and had a great regard for the late Dr. W. G. Grace, who often met the Prince. Ground landlord of the Oval, he has frequently visited the Pavilion on the occasion of big matches.

As everyone knows, his greatest recreation is hunting, and in the winter it enables him to keep "fit" as well as giving him real pleasure. The Prince is fond of swimming, and has had many a swim at the Bath Club in the summer before breakfast.

His choice of plays is in the direction of musical comedy or a "thriller." He dislikes his visits to theatres being mentioned



[Topical.

H.R.H. IS AN IDEAL AFTER-DINNER SPEAKER.

beforehand, and has often bought stalls at the last moment, chancing who his neighbours might be. He is like Queen Mary, who was a keener playgoer in her youth than she is to-day, in remembering plays and players. He has brought blushes of pleasure to the face of more than one well-known actor by recalling his past triumphs. A short time ago he went to see "Journey's End," sitting in the eighteenth row of the stalls.

The Prince during the third year of the War renewed his experience of the Navy. Unknown to the public, he spent some days in a torpedo boat, taking his fair share of the work. He had his camera on board and snapped several interesting photographs. Some time afterwards one of his former messmates on the T.B.D. was delighted to receive at his home address some excellent prints of these snapshots.

His war experiences left an ineffaceable impression on the Prince, which all who have heard him speak to ex-Service men (for instance, on Armistice Night in the Royal Albert Hall) will understand. Here is a little story of the Prince at the Front.

Two soldiers were told off to look after an officer. He plunged along the trenches, quite reckless of attack. One of the men said to the other: "It's all very well for 'im. If 'e gets killed, 'e's all right. But what abart us?" The officer was the Prince.

When he had begged Lord Kitchener to let him go to the Front in the earliest days of the War, Lord Kitchener said: "I don't mind you running the risk of being killed, but I'm hanged if I will allow you to run the risk of being captured." But ultimately the Prince got his way, and arrived at Boulogne on November 16th, 1914. The sights he witnessed, and the courageous goodhumour of the men, have never been forgotten by him.

When he crossed to France his first duty was to attend the funeral service of Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, who had been one of the heroes of his boyhood. The Prince had a statuette of Lord Roberts as one of his treasured possessions when a little lad. Soon after the Prince had arrived in France his chauffeur was killed by a bomb. In the first winter he was up and down the lines, once going within 1,500 yards of the enemy. He visited gallant King Albert of the Belgians at La Panne. Once at least he was induced to play in a football match. Indian troops adored him as the eldest son of their Emperor. Not many people are aware that, after the Caporetto disaster, the Prince went to Italy in May, 1918, and reported himself at headquarters in these words: "I am the Prince of Wales, and I have come to place myself at the disposal of Italy."

During the War he had as wide an experience of all Fronts as any officer, and he has said since that at least the War added to his

knowledge of geography!

By the way, the Prince was given in his youth a very thorough grounding in history. I heard that once when he and two of his brothers were going round Westminster Abbey with Mdlle. Bricka, his first teacher, and Mr. H. P. Hansell, his tutor, the Dean of Westminster complimented Mr. Hansell on having taught the Prince English history with such completeness. The young Prince said quietly to the Dean: "But, sir, it was Mdlle. Bricka who taught me before Mr. Hansell came."

King Edward asked his grandson on one occasion what part of English history he was studying.

"Oh, all about Perkin Warbeck," was the

reply.

"And who was Perkin Warbeck?" said the King, to test the Prince.

"He pretended he was the son of a King, but he really wasn't, for he was the son of

respectable parents!"

Since July, 1919, the Prince has resided in St. James's Palace. York House-so named because our present King occupied it when Duke of York—contains an ample suite of apartments, though it is not so imposing as Clarence House, which was the London home of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh in Victorian days, and is now the residence of the Duke of Connaught. Prince is installed so comfortably that he is not in any hurry to cross the road and live at Marlborough House, although the latter is perhaps more stately. Since Queen Alexandra's death many internal changes have been made in Marlborough House with a view to the Prince's ultimate residence there. There was one peculiar feature about the hall in the days when King Edward lived there as Prince of Wales. On the table near the front door was always kept a small bottle of brandy. The reason for this was that once a caller was taken suddenly ill and no brandy could be obtained speedily for his Henceforward, the Prince ordered that this bottle should be kept handy.

The Prince of Wales has a pleasant study, with bookshelves that reveal his taste for fiction and for volumes dealing with naval



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AS COLONEL-IN-CHIEF OF THE WELSH GUARDS.

and military matters. The Prince also enjoys sportsmen's reminiscences, and has quite a number of volumes on his shelves written by experts on golf, football, cricket, etc. He has a fairly complete knowledge of the chief boxing contests of the last few years, and at the Albert Hall or the National Sporting Club he has seen many important matches. There is no doubt that Commander Louis Greig, when he was "guide,

AT A MEET OF THE PYTCHLEY,

philosopher, and friend" to the Prince and his brothers, infused them with an enthusiasm for boxing and Rugger. At Twickenham the Prince has often been as keen a critic of an International match as any public schoolboy paying his first visit to the heart-stirring scene on the famous ground.

The Prince likes a good story, and can tell one with an economy of words that adds to the effect. In the War he told Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout, this incident: A British collier steamer was going to Hamburg when war was imminent. The Germans were counting on her coming in with coal for one of their men-of-war. The captain was averse to sailing, but the owner, who had been promised a high price for the coal, urged him to go.

, So he sailed, and at the river mouth a German pilot came on board. On taking

charge of the ship he said '" Now this is German property; war began yesterday." "Did it?" exclaimed the captain. "Then take that," and he downed the pilot with a fearful bang on the head with his telescope. Then he turned the ship round and steamed off as hard as he could—with his German prisoner on board—for England, and got safely back.

The Prince, like father, prefers lively music to classical compositions. A clever banjoist gives him great pleasure, and "jazz" tunes catch his fancy and linger in his memory. He went a dozen times to see the "Blackbirds" when they had such a phenomenal success in London. never goes away without his gramophone, and he is quite a connoisseur in records. Friends abroad often add to his collection, which is now very large and varied. His speech a year or two ago on Armistice Day has had a tremendous sale as a record. I may add that

the tumultuous applause that is "recorded" was used recently on the stage as an effective simulation of a crowd's cheering.

The Prince is a businesslike man; otherwise he would never overtake the vast correspondence that flows daily into St. James's Palace. King George was the first sovereign to adopt the typewriter at Buckingham Palace for his correspondence. The Prince employs equally up-to-date methods,

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and his Staff have the credit of being as alert as they are courteous. Sir Godfrey Thomas carries his heavy responsibilities with the facility of trained capability, but he would admit that the Prince sets such a high standard of efficiency that the work of the "office," as it may be called, is rendered much easier. One thing the Prince will not do, and that is send his autograph to "all and sundry." Otherwise, he might be doing little else than scribble "Edward P." Only

Newfoundland issue of 1897 had a portrait of him as a child, and fourteen years later he was portrayed on the Newfoundland issue as Prince of Wales.

He is proud to be called "Great Britain's best ambassador," and his world-wide travels have given him a first-hand interest in men and countries. When he was admitted in one and the same evening as a student, a barrister, and a Bencher of the Middle Temple, Lord Coleridge said that the



[Central News.

WEIGHING IN BEFORE TAKING PART IN A BRIGADE OF GUARDS POINT-TO-POINT RACE.

for his personal friends will be enhance the value of a portrait by autographing it. Sometimes a daring young lad or girl proffers a card to the Prince at public functions, but he has had to limit this ministering to heroworship.

He has not inherited the King's enthusiasm for postage-stamp collecting, though he made a start with the customary fervour of a schoolboy. The Prince has figured about half a dozen times on British stamps. The

Prince had, in his formal declaration, stated that his father had no profession, and that he (the Prince) had no occupation.

"Surely," said Lord Coleridge, Prince is the busiest idler there ever

was!"

A visiting Royal Prince once asked H.R.H. how he managed to bear the strain of his crowded life. "I don't," replied the Prince, "have time even to think about it."

II.

THE COMING OF PRINCE CHARMING

N June 23rd, 1894, the evening fell soft and clear, as evenings tend to fall in England at midsummer. This ordinary close to an ordinary day was remarkable only for the complete absence of portents in the meteorological conditions. No unknown star, no unprovoked eclipse, no startling earthquake in the outer suburbs, no blinding vision in the vale of Richmond gave the least indication that the heavens were aware of the advent of a child who became at once the world's most popular baby.

Throughout the world expectant newspaper men sat at their desks with pens poised, awaiting with tense excitement the arrival of the telephoned, telegraphed, or cabled word which would determine for them the all-important question whether to make the subject of their proposed article masculine or feminine—hero or heroine— Prince or Princess!

It is an interesting fact, borne out by a noted statistician, that during this night of highly strung suspense, no fewer than one thousand seven hundred and thirty-four infants first saw the light of day. 1,734 midwives asserted with an ease born of long familiarity: "A very fine child-as fine a child as I ever saw," and 1,734 mothers felt angrily and impotently that this was a gross under-statement of the case, and after this first occasion on which they were the centre of the scene 1,733 infants relapsed into a well-deserved obscurity from which they seldom subsequently emerged. was one child, however, for whom oblivion was impossible, for he was to become throughout the succeeding years firstly the most popular baby, then child, and later Prince in the whole world. That child was His Royal Highness, Edward, Prince of Wales, who had accomplished his first social success by being born!

It was upon White Lodge, a small house quietly set among the green fields and glades of Richmond Park, that with pardonable curiosity the eyes of the world were fixed. Neither time nor space nor etiquette allowed the great British public to indulge their longing to be present at the most private scene a Royal heir and heiress can undergo, but civilisation had thoughtfully provided them with a wonderful medium through which they could learn of the event in all

detail—the Daily Press. Qutside the house, at a respectful distance, were crowds of journalists, already composing in their minds a loyal description of the environment of the happy event. As dusk was falling the news came through that the "Duchess of York was safely delivered of a son at 10 o'clock." Before the morning papers were entering the capacious maw of the printing press, the writers had evolved a description to satisfy the sentiments of the British breakfast-table, and to allow the commonest subjects to share in the inner feelings of a King to be.

"When I was a kid I could do nothing right—now I can do nothing wrong," I heard the Prince of Wales once say to an intimate friend, and in view of the intense curiosity of the whole world in his childhood one can perhaps realise with some understanding this good-humoured remark concerning those early days.

That both the Duke and Duchess wanted a son is certain. Their constant planning and remarks made to various members of the Royal Family showed clearly that it was the dearest wish of both their hearts that a son should be born to them. The Duke of York's eager fondling of the newly arrived child and his open happiness were a source of intense pleasure both to the Royal Family and members of the staff. For the first few hours after the birth of the little Prince Edward, White Lodge buzzed with excitement, which gradually calmed down and subsided into the well-oiled routine maintained in all the Royal households. The Royal baby remained, however, in everybody's mind and on everybody's lips as the only topic of conversation and the centre of the efforts of every member of the Duke of York's household. Everybody wanted to see the baby, everyone wanted to pet it, and but for the good-humoured expostulations of the Duke, together with the Royal doctors and nurses, the lustily crying future Prince of Wales would undoubtedly have become smothered with caresses, pettings and general "fussing."

This was the environment into which the Prince of Wales was born, and it is worthy of remark that it was typical of the environment in which he has lived. "A Prince, therefore a being apart," is the first thought about him. Following upon this, however, comes a second thought: "But the fellow

is human after all!"

Meanwhile the newly born infant was

enjoying his first and last moments as a normal child unconscious of his destinyan unconsciousness in which he of all England was alone. Almost immediately after the news had flashed across the wires, those same wires were charged with congratulatory telegrams, including one couched in terms of unaffected joy from Queen Victoria, the great-grandmother of the Prince of It is pleasant to think anyway that Her Britannic Majesty regarded the Prince of Wales simply as a great-grandson, and brimmed over with great-grand-maternal feelings of happiness at his advent. her undoubted regal pride, which was after all one of the most commendable attributes of the great Queen, it cannot be denied that her feelings must have been imbued with the realisation that a new heir had been born to the throne, and that an uninterrupted reign of four generations seemed assured to her House. There is one fact that indicates the Queen's very human interest in the event, and that is her desire immediately to have a photograph of herself, King Edward, King George and the Prince of Wales, taken in one of the family groups so beloved of the age. The Queen herself insisted that the photograph be made and published at such a price that even the humblest of her subjects could possess a copy, and she had many framed and sent to every member of the Royal Family. She also sent one specially autographed to each of her official representatives in the Colonies and the Dominions.

Certainly for the first few days of his life the Royal Family assumed the chief part of the baby Prince's social round. After his father had seen him, and perhaps shown that ignorance of children and their ways which is so charming and characteristic of the paternal race, his next caller was no less a person than his grandfather, at that time the Prince of Wales.

What passed between the two history fails to relate, but if the subsequent relations between the child and his grandfather are any indication, the interview must have passed off with every satisfaction, for King Edward, being at that time free from parental responsibility, and with a head as yet unburdened by a crown, was perhaps of all the visitors of the Prince in early days the only one who could overlook the fact that he was talking to a future heir to the throne.

A few days later Queen Victoria herself visited White Lodge, accompanied by the

Tsarevitch, Princess Alix of Hesse, and Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg. Throngs awaited the arrival of the Royal great-grandmother at Richmond station, and amid scenes of wild popular enthusiasm the Queen reached White Lodge and disappeared from the eyes of the crowd. Being at last alone with the Duchess and her family, Her Majesty permitted herself to display the feelings typical of the feminine character, and tears of joy welled up in her eyes as she took the infant Prince of Wales in her arms and admired the various attributes pointed out to her by the Duke of York.

"That I should live to see four generations of my family," joyfully said the great Queen; "now I am indeed happy!" A sentiment the whole world voiced with her.

Queen Victoria insisted that Prince Edward had the eyes of his mother and the nose of his father, and it is indeed a fact that even to-day H.R.H. carries in his features these similarities pointed out by his great-grandmother.

This occasion was indeed an important one in the life of our Royal Family. Allow me to describe the scene. In the foreground the Queen bearing in her arms the sleeping infant: at her side the Duchess of York smiling with maternal pride, not unmixed with solicitude for her child; and grouped around the attendant Princes and Princesses, forming a fitting background to the scene. It was the human touch again-a touch that could not be evidenced in the public life of any other Royal Family in Europe, which at that time was hedged in by so much barbed-wire etiquette that their subjects looked upon all royalty as demi-gods. It has always been one of the greatest characteristics of our Royal Family that it has never attempted to cloak its human emotions under the mantle of royalty.

After this meeting there ensued an interval of quiet, interrupted only by the arrival of parcels containing the more ornate portions of infantile attire, the gifts of the Queen and of Princess Alexandra. But there was to follow a more pressing problem than that of the clothing appropriate to the Prince. In three weeks it became clear that even Princes require some further method of address than "the little darling," or more simply and less legally "It," and the necessity arose for finding him a name.

This problem was made more complex by

two facts. The first that there were no fewer than four generations of the family alive at the time, each naturally wishing that the Prince should bear the name of their particular choice. The second that the racial prejudices of all the inhabitants of the Empire must be gratified by a suitable choice of name. Even as it was, diplomatists were a trifle distressed by Queen Alexandra's selection. Queen naturally enough, wished the name of Albert to be given to her great-grandson. eminently normal desire met with some opposition. Reasons of State seemed to indicate that such a name might not meet with the popular approval that the Queen expected, for it raised a question on which the country had never seen truly eye to eve with the Sovereign.

Edward, as grandfather and as Prince of Wales, desired his grandson to bear his own name—a desire that was not impolitic in again stressing the human characteristics of the new infant, showing that Royal blood is much the same as plebeian blood in all essentials.

The Princess of Wales (later Queen Alexandra) had great affection for the name of "Christian," which belonged to her own father and at the same time might counter-balance "Edward" and add point to the historic title "Defender of the Faith."

In this way the child had been endowed with three names, without including the choice of his immediate ancestors. Duke and Duchess of York wished for the name George to be perpetuated in their son, and since "George" has been connected with Saint George and thus with England, tact indicated that Ireland, Scotland and Wales should not be overlooked.

The settlement of this weighty problem required some three days of consultation until the somewhat burdensome triumph of diplomacy was achieved. After that the stage was set in readiness for the ceremony.

Owing to the expressed desire of Queen Victoria, the christening was of a private This meant that the ceremony was to take place at White Lodge, amid an intimate gathering of close friends and relatives.

The intimacy naturally could not be stressed so greatly in the regal circumstances, and indeed the ceremony was shared in all its details by the entire population of Great Britain. The golden christening bowl from

Windsor Castle, the christening robe, which was a replica of Queen Victoria's bridal veil. and the various other details of the historic ceremony, naturally received the greatest publicity. The godmothers and godfathers were the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of Teck. All went well with the ceremony until little Prince Edward was called upon to take the centre of the stage, when, amid the fond but discreet smiles of the whole assemblage, he voiced protest in no uncertain tone. He appreciated neither the cold water nor the number of his names, the latter probably because he was too young to realise that subsequently he would be allowed to sign himself quite briefly "Edward P."; a fact which also escaped the notice of the nation, since Englishmen, Scots, and Irishmen and Welsh all were proud to feel that a Prince of Royal line was bearing their national name.

A few days after his christening, Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David underwent his first change residence, moving to York Lodge, where he remained until August 4th, 1894. an uneventful existence could, however, hardly last, and when his mother went away to St. Moritz for a month to recuperate, the Prince returned to White Lodge under the tutelage of his nurse. Here he received frequent visits from his father, the Duke

During the absence of his mother Prince Edward was in a fair way to being spoilt by his adoring father. This is clearly illustrative of the precocity of princes when it is realised that at this time he was about eight weeks old. In more normal children the esthetic appreciation of playthings is not developed at so early an age, the chief desire being for something to suck. Perhaps therefore, contrary to public opinion, it is probable that the Duke of York was nearer to spoiling the infant's health than its disposition.

The end of August, however, witnessed the close of this "dangerous" state of affairs, for there was a happy reunion of the family, the Duke returning from the Royal estate at Sandringham, and the baby Prince being brought to York House to greet his mother on her return from the Continent.

For the next two or three years there was a hiatus in the public life of "David," as his mother liked to call him. supervision of the Duchess of Teck, he was



[D. Knights-Whittome, Sutton.

AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH AS KNIGHT OF THE GARTER.

placed under the control of a competent nurse, and led the normal life of a wealthy child

He soon became old enough to be petted, and Queen Victoria showed a rather pathetic pleasure in fondling him. The baby was really a godsend to her, since, being a great mother as well as a great Queen, a baby meant a tremendous amount of happiness and interest to her.

"David," or "Albert," as his great-grand-mother would call him, became one of the toys of her old age, and the Queen used frequently to drive over to White Lodge to lavish her affection on him. When circumstances did not permit this journey, "Albert" would be sent for to Buckingham Palace and fed on the kind of food that elderly relatives too frequently give to babies for whom they are not

responsible.

The fondness of the Queen for these visits led to a nursery being prepared in Buckingham Palace where the child could wait until his great-grandmother required him, when, with happy cries, the little Prince would seek her knee. These happy cries were even more prolonged and ecstatic when great-grandmother and great-grandson were drawn round the grounds of Buckingham Palace or of Windsor in the donkey carriage—an engaging and much-published picture of family life.

Perhaps at this point it would be wise to sum up the real lesson of the Prince's infancy. The task is not yet difficult, for up to the age of two or three years it is hardly reasonable to say his training had begun. The training of the Press and the Public had on the other hand started with great thoroughness at the birth of the Prince, and been carried on without once flagging. Intimate details of his aches and pains, his mirth and wails, his incomings and outgoings, were ever before the public eye. Long before the Prince was conscious of his destiny, the whole world had christened him as its Prince Charming—a title which the years have only succeeded in fixing more securely upon him.

To-day the Prince is such a part of the British Empire that we cannot conceive a more calamitous event than his death, with the qualifying exception perhaps of the passing of his father, King George. Certainly the nation would be shaken to its foundations if he died. Thank God, he is always, as his physicians say, "in the pink of condition."

III.

INFANCY.

"As a kid it was the very devil!"

The Prince of Wales.

HAVE it on excellent authority that all the children of King George and Queen

Mary were mischievous.

"They ragged each other unmercifully," Lady Bertha Dawkins informed me; "and although all the children were naughty at times, the Prince of Wales—when he was Prince Edward—was by far the naughtiest!" Lady Bertha talks with knowledge since she was-and still is-one of Queen Mary's Ladies-in-Waiting, and was constantly in charge of all the children of their Majesties in their infancy and until they left the nursery for the schoolroom. It is really rather refreshing to hear that the Prince of Wales was a naughty child, and after all, seeing him and knowing him to-day, one can readily believe it. Like all brothers, he delighted in such crude pastimes as putting worms down Princess Mary's neck and pushing frogs and other things in the beds of his brothers. From a study of the facts concerning the childhood of the Prince, one is convinced that it was, after all, a very ordinary and a very human childhood. The Prince looks back very fondly on those days.

The interesting part of the Prince's child-hood is not, however, his small delinquencies, so much as the various forces and influences which surrounded him and which played a part in influencing his character.

First in precedence and in age came Queen Victoria. In her declining years her first British great-grandson went far towards achieving that place in her affections so long rendered vacant by the death of the Prince Consort. To "David" she devoted many hours during the last eight years of her life, having him to stay with her at Windsor, and when his mother came to claim him at the end of the visit appealing, nay, commanding that his stay should be prolonged. How great a part she played in the actual moulding of the child is difficult to assess, but it is doubtful whether she created any greater impression than that which any indulgent great-grandmother has made upon a child. At her death in 1901 "David," who was present at her passing, was heart-broken for at least a week, but after that, as was but normal in a child, his grandmothernow Queen Alexandra—received his transferred affections and represented for a longer time the apotheosis of indulgence in his eyes.

There were, however, earlier in his life two events which did far more to train him for his future business. On December 14th, 1895, the present Duke of York was born, while sixteen months later Princess Mary, his first and only sister, made her entrance to the Royal Family.

It was perhaps to "David" that the new arrivals had the most importance. viously, as an only child, he had no subjects upon whom he could practise the arts of ruling, for nurses even in palaces cannot but be tempted to make the most of their opportunities for enforcing their wills. with two younger children, Prince Edward, with the immense superiority of eighteen months' longer sojourn in the world, could lord it as he liked. He was inevitably the leader in nursery games, the tactful but omnipotent sovereign of the leisure moments between meals and exercising and baths and bed. This leadership in an eldest son was only normal, but it was enhanced by the strict training of the whole family from their earliest youth to realise that "David" was in some obscure way a being apart. He was a man who would be mentioned by name in the weekly service of the Church of England, while they would be grouped in overcrowded and diminished glory as "All the Royal Family."

In March, 1900, the population of his "kingdom" rose suddenly by 50 per cent. owing to the birth of a new brother, Prince Henry; and some nine months after he realised that he was to be left an "orphan" for a time while his father and mother went off upon a long-projected Colonial tour. The death of Queen Victoria caused this voyage to be postponed until the March of 1901, when the Duke and Duchess of York -now Prince and Princess of Wales-set sail upon the cruiser Ophir, leaving their children behind under the care of their grandfather—now proclaimed King Edward. The Prince and Princess felt keenly this " It nearly separation from their children. broke my heart to part with them," said Her Royal Highness.

King Edward gave the almost brokenhearted Royal mother his promise that he would look after her children until the *Ophir* returned from her long cruise.

"I'll look after the young beggars," he said, with characteristic joviality—a promise he kept almost to the extent of

spoiling them. It was during these months that the "Peacemaker" became so strongly attached to Prince Edward, and whenever he could spare the time he sent for his eldest grandchild and took him out for drives with him or played his favourite game—hide-and-seek.

King Edward, of course, loved children. He had an intense hatred, in fact, of all bonds and conventions, and it was not long after he had ascended the throne before he threw off the iron-bound etiquette insisted upon by the great Queen and began to earn for himself the title of the most democratic Sovereign in Europe.

In all his relations with his eldest grandson he resisted the temptation, which indeed for him scarcely existed, to preach about the duties and dignities of princeship, and was content to chat with him upon the more ordinary ambitions of a boy of eight With King Edward, "David" could discuss the pros and cons of the honourable calling of engine-driver for the heir to the throne. Opinion between grandfather and grandson was at the time rather divided between the rival claims of that profession and those of a policeman. Searchers for prophecies will not be seriously perturbed by finding an analogy between the Prince's early choices and his present career. all the time the atmosphere in which the boy was reared tended to turn his interests to military matters. Whenever he visited London-at Buckingham Palace, House, or St. James's-he was confronted by the imposing spectacle of His Majesty's Brigade of Guards. He witnessed often the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, and heard the interminable tramp of the sentries outside the gates. Whilst staying at Sandringham with the King and Queen, he even visited the Military Tournament at Islington with his aunt, Princess Victoria. Here, with a shocking lack of Royal dignity, he seized the military bearskin of one of the guard of honour and donned it, to the intense delight of the audience but the secret chagrin of the Royal party.

During the absence of his father and mother little Prince Edward grew from a small and rather troublesome child into a sturdy youngster who began to develop almost daily the various manly characteristics of his grandfather, King Edward, with whom he spent so much time.

Gradually the months passed and the Ophir was once more sighted in the Channel. All the Royal children were taken out on

the Royal Yacht, Victoria and Albert, to welcome as soon as possible their homecoming parents. As the yacht drew alongside the Ophir, Princess Mary waved frantically to the tall lady under the stern awning, crying at the top of her small voice, "Mamma! Mamma!" The Princess of Wales, with tears in her eyes, waved quite as eagerly to her beloved children. Soon the official welcomes were over and the Prince and Princess of Wales were free to give vent to their pent-up feelings at being re-united with their sons and daughter.

"Well, and how is David?" asked the Princess of Wales of her eldest son when the young man, with the diffidence of his sex, extricated himself from the fond

embrace of his mother.

"I'm fine, thanks, Mother," replied the diminutive Prince Edward; and this dignified "Mother" made the Princess realise that "David" had indeed grown somewhat during her absence, from the baby she had known and dreamed about into the rather self-conscious but stalwart small boy who stood with such dignity beside his grandfather, King Edward, who, seeing his grandson's amusing aloofness from the embraces of his mother, realised that the child was indeed a "chip of the old block."

By this time it was considered that the Prince was old enough to be placed under the tutelage of a man who could imbue him with those virile qualities which are as valuable in the recreations of an heir-

apparent as of anyone else.

He had already learnt to circumvent the nursery discipline without much difficulty, finding delightful hiding-places beneath the beds and in the wardrobes when his presence was required in the schoolroom. Punishment, however, of a nature that owed nothing to the Froebel system tended to check these flights towards his private pleasure, and a conviction of the error of his ways eventually entered his mind through an indirect and old-fashioned route. The Princess of Wales, though ever an indulgent mother, was stern and obdurate when derelictions of duty were discovered.

Both his father and his mother devoted much time and care to their sons' education, and with their indulgent grandparents around were often hard put to it to avoid an appearance of tyranny to children accustomed only to adulation.

His Majesty King George, as is the wont of fathers who have "the office" to attend to, was somewhat more remote from his children and occupied the position of a distant god who had a distinct scheme for the family universe. He was deeply imbued with the desire to make his son a worthy Prince of Wales—a task intensely catholic in its scope but always involving a stern adherence to the word "Duty." Whatever the public wishes a Prince to be, it is his "duty" to attempt. When they wish him to be regal, no one must be more dignified than he. When they wish him to visit a hospital, no one must have a better bedside manner. When they wish him to visit the Dominions over the sea, no one must seem more democratic and unassuming. When they wish him to ride in point-to-points, no one must ride so fast and yet so cautiously.

At that time it was enough for the boy Prince to learn from his father the meaning of the blessed word "duty" and the unpleasant corollaries it has. Even now custom cannot quite have staled its irksome-Thus when the Prince had reached the age of eight his father called in another man to assist in the preparation of his son for kingship. This was the Prince's tutor and companion, Mr. H. P. Hansell. Hansell had previously been a housemaster at Rossall, and had thus had considerable contact with boys of slightly more advanced ages. His influence on his new charge is difficult to over-estimate, for it lasted for more than a decade, and in H.R.H.'s own words, "cannot be paid in mere thanks."

Naturally more has been thought of the Prince's feelings upon being put in charge of a tutor than of the tutor's feelings in

taking charge of a Prince.

Of the two the tutor had the more difficult task in making friends with a shy, highspirited and inevitably rather spoilt small boy, who had realised already the magnitude of his rank, without fully appreciating its responsibilities. Furthermore, lessons were from now onward to be lessons, conducted with books and pens and papers, with proper hours and proper studies. Mr. Hansell had, however, the advantage of being able to take up a strong disciplinary attitude from the beginning, and as he had a most pleasant character, and had been carefully chosen from a host of candidates, found but little difficulty in attracting the respect and attention of his charge. King George may still have fulfilled the ultimate functions of a god, but Mr. Hansell was his prophet.

"As a kid it was the very devil!" said the Prince in later life when commenting



ON BOARD H.M.S. "RENOWN."

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AS SCOUT.

upon his early days of realisation that he was heir to the throne. Mr. Hansell was the means by which the realisation was inculcated.

It is peculiarly irritating to any normal child to be told tactfully that "little gentlemen" do not allow their ablutionary processes to cease at the hands and face but go so far as to wash behind the ears; or, alternatively, that "little gentlemen" despise the means provided by Nature for the purpose of finishing gravy, and that bread beside the plate is there for quite another purpose. "David" must therefore have found it doubly hard that there was an additional and formidable list of things that "little princes" did not do.

"Little princes" had no desire to go and play cricket with the village children, as "David" did. This desire was not easy to gratify, since; after escaping from the attendant footmen, he found the village children not so anxious for his participation in the sport. The theory is that this was because they recognised his rank and felt embarrassed, but one never knows with children.

Upon Mr. Hansell, therefore, devolved the onerous task of representing and forcing the artificial code of "little princes" upon the chief representative of that class in the country. Furthermore, he had to indicate to "Bertie" and "Mary" that there was a gulf between them and their brother which their close kinship could not entirely bridge. To maintain this gap without an undue show of favouritism was a task at which even the most tactful of tutors might have quailed. Whether Mr. Hansell did quail or not the public must remain in ignorance; but he undoubtedly succeeded admirably in the task he set out upon, and, without lessening the family bonds of affection, managed to make his charges realise that there could be no rivalry between thema state of affairs that would be most unfortunate for any ordinary boy, but was the necessary part of the education of a Prince of Wales.

In fact, with the arrival of Mr. Hansell ended the human infancy of "David": henceforth he was learning his profession, and as the blind victim of Fate his future career cannot be criticised save in so far as he played or failed to play the part the public expected of him. This story must therefore mainly be a chronicle of successes in this sphere, but it is still open to the spectator to criticise the conception which the public has considered as fitting for the heir to the throne.

Thus the next five years passed for the young Prince in a more unhuman fashion. His completely unformed mind was in charge of those who seldom forgot for a moment the type of model they were to turn out. Even the lessons he did were

flavoured with an unusual tinge; for instead of working for examinations, as is but natural in a normal healthy child, "David" was forced to learn for the sake of knowledge. He had a French tutor especially

to teach him French; and, more remarkable, he had Mr. Cecil Sharp, the expert in folklore, songs and dances, to teach him something of those accomplishments.

As his valet, "David" had one servant — Mr. Frederick Finch—who has remained in his service almost continuously ever since. He was the Prince's batman during the War, and is at present the steward of York House. If it is true that no man is a hero to his valet, the influence of Mr. Finch on his Royal Highness's education must have been of the most salutary and deep-seated nature.

His games, too, were not neglected, either by Mr. Hansell or the young boy himself. With the coming of his tutor and his dignity the spontaneous games of the Royal Family were put aside with the rest of the unconsciousness of his state. There were no more acrobatics on the Royal furniture to displease his parents and frighten his sister. There were no more of those delightful cycle races round the flower-beds at Sandringham, where "follow-my-leader" was carried on with destruction to the herbaceous borders and a catastrophic finale among the competitors.

Instead of these, the manly British sports of climbing, tennis, cricket, and swimming were inculcated into the Royal children, "David" and "Albert." Climbing, it was true, needed but little encouragement, since even Royal blood, if the purple stream is

followed far enough into antiquity, leads to the primeval forest. Tennis, on the other hand, was a sport for which "David" showed no aptitude whatever. His play was impetuous and uncontrolled, resulting



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AS COLONEL-IN-CHIEF OF THE SCINDE HORSE.

at times in the destruction of windows, and practically never in the defeat of his more formidable opponent, Princess Mary. It is probable that from this time dates the distaste of H.R.H. for this kind of sport. Finally as to cricket and swimming: the

former was a fitting game for anyone who had to represent the Englishman before professional soccer was in its gilded prime, and the latter, while being a not unpleasant exercise, was naturally an indispensable qualification for one who in the future would have the closest claim to "rule the waves."

Thus with work and princely dignity and play and princely dignity "David" reached the age of thirteen and the time came when it was decided that he should enter the Navy by going to Osborne. Seeing that

entrance to Osborne consisted of an easy qualifying examination in conjunction with an interview of much greater importance, it seemed to be a novel and delightfully democratic touch to allow the young Prince to sit for his entrance examination just like any commoner. With Mr. Hansell as a tutor it was impossible for any normal lad to fail in his examination, and it is perhaps needless to say that "David" passed both this and the subsequent interview with flying colours.

In our next issue the story of Edward P. will be continued through youth and early manhood to the stirring period of the Great War.



[Central News.

H.R.H. WITH A WALLABY PRESENTED TO HIM IN AUSTRALIA.



"Miss Grant sat down to her desk . . . 'Not so bad.' She drew back from the damp portrait. 'I do best when I dash it.'"

THE LITTLE MILLINER

- By H. C. BAILEY
- ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

N moments of bitterness, when work is continuous, Mr. Fortune has been heard to complain that the life of a policeman is an insult to the human reason. It is then his conviction that he was born to be a family doctor: to keep babies blooming, mothers quiet and fathers in a good temper: and he mourns the fate which made him the scientific adviser of the police force, for he

compares the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department to an undertaker. This has been resented. But he points out to Lomas that the police, like the undertaker, do nothing until the only thing to be done is clearing up the remains with pomp and circumstance: a procedure fundamentally irrational. His favourite example in this argument is the case of the little milliner.

It began with the card of Lady Jemima St. Lo. No woman since Florence Nightingale has found other people so much work to do. Reggie Fortune was sinking into a doze between tea and dinner when Lady Jemima's card came before his eyes. He blinked. He said "Help!". He became aware that it bore an inscription. He sat up. The writing of Lady Jemima is of the most modern art: it does not resemble anything, it suggests emotions. After some time it appeared to Reggie that Lady Jemima intended to say, "Do help the poor child."

He gazed forlornly at his parlourmaid. "There's a lady waiting," said she.

Reggie moaned and went to his consultingroom. The "poor child" who ran at him was some six feet high. He is not. She was of a stately shape and dressed to show it. She found him less impressive.

"Mr. Fortune?" she cried, and stared at him. Her handsome, haughty face became

blank and she giggled.

"Yes, that being that, let's sit down,"

said Reggie.

"Sorry. I am awful. I thought you'd be big and important and—oo," again she giggled.

"Like a policeman?" Reggie suggested. She nodded. She became intensely earnest. "You are really sort of high up in the police force, aren't you? Lady Jemima said you were." She looked like a tragic goddess. Her speech was Cockney, sharp and strong.

"Yes. Very good of Lady Jemima. I tell the police a few things sometimes."

"And they take notice of you, Mr. Fortune?" She leant across his table.

"Oh yes. I have known it happen. What do you want the police to notice?"

"I'm most awfully worried, don't you know?" she said in the drawl of a perfect lady, then relapsed into the twang of London streets. "I don't 'arf know what I'm doing. They all think I'm just potty about 'er." She gazed at Mr. Fortune and her classic nose wrinkled, her large eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, no, no," said Mr. Fortune gently.

"Who is she, though?"

"Of course I am sweet on 'er," the goddess admitted. "She's a dear. And then going off like this! She was in the 'ats, you know."

"Where was that?" said Mr. Fortune

with anxiety.

"There, I never told you! I'm getting it all wrong, I'm so upset. Look here, my

name's Miss 'Iggs. I'm a mannikin at Amilee's."

"Of course." Mr. Fortune sighed satisfaction that he had the goddess classified at last. "Of course," with her beauty and her accent she would be a mannequin—at Amélie's. Amélie is a dressmaker of distinction, but economical. Just the shop for Lady Jemima. The affair was becoming partially reasonable.

The goddess went on with a rush. "Miss Gray was in the 'ats. Been there a long time. Earning good money too. She didn't go with anyone, kep 'erself to 'erself; but we been friends, Mr. Fortune. She liked me, she did. She'd come 'ome with me and 'ave a bit o' dinner o' Sundays, 'er 'aving no people of 'er own, though quite the lady. But she wouldn't take things off you and do nothing herself. Cely wasn't that kind. Let me call 'er Cely, she did, and called me Bertha—when we wasn't in the shop. And many's the time she's taken me to the theatre, because she 'adn't a 'ome to ask me back. Said she liked it best wiv me. And now she's gone, Mr. Fortune, gone right off and never no word. What I say is, there's something wrong. Something's been and 'appened to 'er. She wouldn't go away and not tell me nothing—not Cely."

"And the alarmin' fact is that she did," Reggie murmured. "I see." He considered Miss Higgs with dreamy eyes.

"She never went natural, Mr. Fortune. It's my belief she was took. Kidnapped or something. Like girls are, you know; that's what I told the police. But the inspector 'e did nothing but grin. Fat-'ead!"

"Yes. What was the inspector's the-

ory?" said Reggie.

"Theory!" The goddess snorted. "I don't know. He said, 'Girls do leave home, Miss 'Iggs,' he said superior like, and grinned at me; 'don't you worry, my dear,' he said. I could ha' slapped his nasty face." And her large eyes flashed on Reggie.

"Yes. I'm not grinning," said Reggie quickly. "When did Miss Gray vanish?"

"Last time I saw her was at the shop on Saturday. She never said a word about going away, she was just like usual. Then

"She's just sweet, Mr. Fortune. A little quiet thing you wouldn't 'ardly notice 'er."

"But you want me to, you know," Reggie protested. "She never gave you a photograph?"

[&]quot;One moment. What is usual? What is she like?"

"She never was took that I know," Miss Higgs meditated profoundly. "She's fair, and her hair's bobbed, and she's got grey eyes. Such nice eyes. Moddam says she's very shick. But it's not that. She just looks sweet."

Reggie sighed. "Last seen, looking sweet,

on Saturday."

"Then o' Monday she didn't come to the shop. Moddam 'eard nothing from 'er. So in the evening I went round to 'er lodgings to see if she'd been took ill. And she wasn't there, Mr. Fortune!"

"Where are the lodgings?"

"Camden Town. 7, Navarino Street, Camden Town. Nice respectable 'ouse. But you know what lodgings are. Not 'omely, poor girl."

"Miss Gray didn't like them?"

"You wouldn't yourself. Cely did want a place of her own. But what's a girl to do? Well, the old landlady said Cely came in Saturday all right and then she went out again, leaving word she was going away for the week-end, but she 'adn't come back. Well then, Tuesday she wasn't at the shop either and no word of 'er. I trapesed off to 'er lodgings again and still she 'adn't come back. Then I went straight to the police. Like I told you. Fat lot of good that was. Now it's Thursday, Mr. Fortune. She's been gone pretty near a week and no one's doing anything to find her, and God knows what's 'appening to 'er."

"Yes, Yes," Reggie murmured. "Ta-

kin' the landlady as honest—"

"I don't know. She's the usual."

"Miss Gray meant to go off for the weekend: without telling anybody where. You

don't think she often did that?"

"I don't believe she'd ever done it before. Don't you see, Cely's a good girl!" There was a cry of faith in her voice. She blushed, she went on quickly: "She's not like some of 'em, Mr. Fortune. She never would look at a man."

"Yes. She has a friend," said Reggie gravely. "Well, well. No other friends—

no people of her own?"

"She wasn't one to make friends much. I never 'eard of any. She 'adn't any relations anywhere. She often said that."

"And yet she meant to go off somewhere

without telling you. I wonder."

"Why, don't you see?" Miss Higgs cried.

"If she told the old woman she'd be away for the week-end, she meant just that, just the week-end and no more. She was always straight. And she's stayed on and on.

That's what ain't right about it. If you knew her you'd know she wouldn't never leave us all worrying."

"Yes. Yes. I thought of that point myself." Reggie contemplated her with

closing eyes. "Quite a good point."

"Ah, you understand. Don't you?" her beautiful throat quivered. "You talk so funny and queer. But you feel things. You'll have her looked for, won't you? Oh, sir, make 'em find 'er, for God's sake. I can't bear to think of 'er being—being—like she may be."

"Don't think anything, my dear," said Reggie gently. "Not till we know." He stood up. "I'll make the police have a look for her. I can't make 'em find her. There's ten thousand things might have been." He held out his hand. "But the worst don't

often happen."

"Oo-you're a gentleman," said Miss

Higgs, and wept.

When she was gone Mr. Fortune fell into his deepest chair and moaned. "Missin' from Camden Town: a little woman with fair hair bobbed and nice grey eyes: just sweet. Oh, my aunt! You fall over 'em. Possibilities practically infinite and mainly nasty." He has an active conscience. He meditated uncomfortably. He wriggled. He reached for the telephone and rang up Scotland Yard. "Mr. Fortune speaking. I want to know if there's any news of Celia Gray, reported missing from Camden Town. You haven't heard? You wouldn't. Let 'em know I want to see the reports in the morning, please."

Next morning the room of the Hon. Sydney Lomas received him early. Lomas cocked a bright and quizzical eye.

"My dear fellow-"

"Hullo!" said Reggie morosely. "Any news?"

"This anxiety is affecting. All my regrets, Reginald. We had no notion you were interested in the girl. I'm afraid there's nothing to give you any encouragement." He rang for Superintendent Bell. "Speaking as your friend, I can only advise you to think no more about her."

"We are not amused, Lomas." Reggie wandered to the window and looked out at the spring sunshine. His round face was set in simple childlike gloom. Superintendent Bell came in briskly, greeted him, received a grunt and looked at him with curiosity and apprehension.

"Mr. Fortune isn't pleased with you,

Bell," Lomas chuckled.

"I'm afraid we haven't got much, sir," Bell frowned at his papers. "But it seems a straight case."

"Get on, get on. Let's have it."

"Celia Gray, lodging 7, Navarino Street, Camden Town, employed as milliner at Amélie's . . . Gray left lodgings Saturday, taking suit-case, destination unknown. Not since heard of. Landlady and employer unable to account for absence. Left some clothes behind and odds and ends of no value. Furniture not her own. No rent owing. Never left work before. Never away from lodgings without notice. Seldom went away. Considered respectable girl. Nothing known of any followers."

"Our active and intelligent police force," Reggie mumbled. He swung round to face them. "The inspector got all that from

Bertha. He's done nothing."

Lomas shrugged. "My dear fellow! What was he to do? The girl said she was going away and she's gone. If we went looking for all the girls who go away for a week-end and stay rather longer we should be busy."

"Better to do nothing, isn't it?" said Reggie. "You might stop a crime or two before it happened if you took trouble. Much more official to come along afterwards

and bury the dead."

Lomas stiffened. "Taking this matter rather seriously, aren't you, Fortune? Of course, if we had known the little milliner was a friend of yours we'd have been after her with the whole force."

Reggie gazed at him. "Bertha wanted to slap your inspector's face," he murmured.

"I quite understand."

The respectability of Superintendent Bell was alarmed. The professional instinct of Superintendent Bell was troubled. "Beg your pardon, Mr. Fortune," he said hastily. "Don't mind my asking. Did you know this Miss Gray?"

"I never saw her."

"Then I don't understand, sir. You don't know but what she's the sort of girl to go off on the quiet."

"Oh yes. Yes. I've talked to Bertha.

Bertha says she isn't."

"Good Gad!" Lomas gasped. "But, my dear fellow, what does it all come to? A little milliner chose to go away without telling anybody where she was going. There are a thousand possible reasons. Lots of 'em perfectly respectable. She may just have wanted to break with the shop and her old friends and start fresh somewhere. She

may have gone to get married and don't want these girls at the shop to know about it."

"Yes. Yes. I thought of that, Lomas. It could be."

"Of course it could. Happens often

enough."

"But it don't cover all the facts. If she wanted to disappear quietly she wouldn't have made a mystery for Bertha to worry about."

"My dear Reginald! You want her to be quite reasonable. Girls aren't. Especially when they're running away with a man. She

didn't bother about explanations."

"Oh yes, she did. She said she was going away for the week-end. Just as easy to say she was going for a week or for ever. But she said the week-end. What's happened to keep her? What's happened that she can't send word?"

Lomas leant back in his chair and smiled. "What Bertha says isn't evidence, Regi-

nald."

"Oh yes, it is. Bertha was telling the truth. Your inspector didn't believe her. She said he was a fat-head, Lomas. I rather agree with her."

"Thanks very much," Lomas shrugged.

"It comes to this, then. You want to make a mystery of it because you like the girl's

face."

"I never like anybody's face," said Reggie with indignation. "And she's taller than any woman has a right to be. I feel small and inadequate still. Bertha is good but depressing. Only she's right, bother her. It is a nasty mess."

"It's all in the air," Lomas grumbled. "What do you want to do? Advertise her missing, with description and portrait?"

"There isn't a portrait. Description is small, fair, bobbed, nice grey eyes, just sweet."

"That would only get you about a million

girls."

"Yes. I had thought of that, Lomas dear. We won't advertise anything yet. The people who've been keeping her might do something hasty."

"What have you got in your head?"

Lomas cried.

"Nothing. Nothing. That's what worries me. You don't feel a vacancy. Well, well. I want some sound fellow to take up the case, some fellow that's a man and a brother." He smiled on Superintendent Bell. "Yes. Bell is strongly indicated."

"Thank you, sir." Bell was pleased and

uncomfortable. "I'd be very happy. But I don't see my way."

"Nor do I. Come and have a look at

Celia's lodgings and Celia's shop."

"You're for it, Bell," Lomas chuckled. "Take him away. Make him buy her a wedding present."

Reggie gazed at him with melancholy wonder and went out.

"Queer how it's taken him, sir." Bell rose.
"I'd say there's nothing in it myself—but he has a way of feeling things."

"Confound him!" said Lomas. "Con-

found you, Bell! Go away."

Mr. Fortune's car bore him and Bell into the depths of Camden Town. Navarino Street is shabby genteel houses, all stucco and lace curtains. The inside of number seven fulfilled dismally the promise of the outside. It smelt musty, its landlady was of a dingy and acid propriety, her parlour plush and antimacassars. By the dignity of Superintendent Bell she was unawed. She became shrill with many grievances. She was a respectable woman and kept a respectable house, and the police had no right to come bothering her: nothing but botheration; bad enough to have a lodger go off and no notice given: she couldn't afford to keep her rooms empty on the chance my lady was coming back, and she had a right to a week's money anyhow. So the landlady at length, with repetitions and variations, and the persistence of Bell could extract from her nothing like a fact which they did not know.

"We'll see her rooms, please," he said.
"Rooms!" the landlady sniffed. "She only had one. Bed-sitting she was. First floor back." She took them up, lingered, was dismissed, and withdrew, snorting affront.

"She's all right, sir, I'd say."

"Yes. Yes. Only a fool," Reggie murmured. He wandered round the room. It was drearily uncomfortable: stiff chairs, a rickety round table, wardrobe and drawers of fawn graining, china of contorted shape and hideous pattern.

"Looks like all the cheap lodgings I ever

saw," said Bell.

"Yes. I don't wonder Celia wanted to get out of it," Reggie mumbled.

"Did she, though? That's rather a point,

Sir."

"One of the points, yes." Reggie looked about him. On the faded walls there were some pictures sentimental and religious. A few popular novels stood on a shelf. "Celia's room don't tell us much about Celia."

"You'd say she wasn't anything in paricular."

"I'd say she was poor and didn't mean to make a home here." Reggie opened the wardrobe. There were several frocks in it, good frocks.

"Well, well," he murmured, and went to the chest of drawers. The first that he pulled out was full of dainty clothes. The others also. "I would also say she meant to come back, Bell."

"I'm sure," Bell nodded. "No girl would leave these behind. Silk too. That's where the money went. She's got a regular

trousseau."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. His round face was without expression.

"You mean Mr. Lomas may be right, sir." Bell smiled. "She's just gone off to get married."

"Leavin' her trousseau behind. Not much done, is it? No. Don't you feel we're up against something queer?" He rummaged in the drawers, he pulled out a box covered with chintz.

"Hallo! She did have some papers, then," Bell said eagerly. "Landlady's bills. Savings Bank book. Matter of ten pounds she had. List of clothes. What's this? Menu of restaurant dinner. At the Bristol too. Flying a bit high for once. And a champagne cork. Some theatre programmes. What's this? Picture cut out of a paper. Photograph of a bit of country. And that's the lot. Not a single letter." Reggie was looking at the picture. "Well, sir, we haven't got much here."

"I wouldn't say that," Reggie murmured.
"No. I wouldn't say that." And still he gazed at the picture. It showed the head of a valley among hills crowned with trees.
"What did she keep this for, Bell?"

"Good Lord, sir, how can you tell? Took her fancy, I suppose. It's cut out of one of the daily papers that publish photos o' landscape. Nice bit o' country."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured.

"Looks like a bit of the chalk downs, to my mind."

"Oh, no, no. Look at the stream. Those slopes ought to be limestone." He put it away in his pocket. "Let's get on. We'll try Amélie now." He ran downstairs.

"Why, sir, do you think you're on to something?" said Bell as he settled himself in the car. "We're where we were, to my mind."

"No, no. Deeper and deeper yet."

"Well, I don't know why you say so."

"Oh, Bell! Oh, my Bell! We find the girl was gettin' clothes together; apparently for her trousseat. But her best friend didn't know there was a man. And when she vanished, she didn't go to get married. We find also that she's been dining lavish and she thought a lot of the dinner. And finally there is a bit of country which she's very keen on."

"If you can make anything of all that!" Bell cried.

"I can't. That's what worries me. That's why I am in a hurry. It's all dark. And the girl's been missing a week."

"You do find such a lot in things," Bell objected. "About that picture, sir. Lots o' people keep photos of a bit of country they

like.'

"She didn't care for pictures. She didn't keep anything to speak of. What she did keep meant something."

Bell shrugged. "A girl that kept cham-

pagne corks!"

"You're so inaccurate. She kept one champagne cork. Which is very suggestive. There was just one dinner and one bottle of champagne which had mattered in her life."

"That looks like a man, don't it?" said

Bell.

"Yes. Yes. One of the unknown quantities is probably a man. And her particular friend had never heard of any man. She kept him very quiet. Reason obscure. Purposes of hypothetical man also obscure."

"If some fellow's been playing tricks with the girl, that'd account for everything," Bell pronounced. "Take it like that, and

we've got a regular, ordinary case."

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie moaned. "Why do you fellows want to make every case an ordinary case? 'Is it weakness of intellect, Birdie? I cried.' Lomas said it was all right, a man was just marrying her; now you say it's all right, a man's just ruining her. It isn't ordinary, it isn't all right. It's all queer and horrid. And we can't get near her. We can't get near."

Bell looked at him curiously. His round face was pale and unhappy, like a child's in

pain it cannot understand.

The car turned out of the stream of traffic into a certain by-street where houses which still try to look private have been taken by tailors and discreet, mysterious agents. There Amélie has established what she would like me to call her *atelier*.

A minute page in apple green opened to them the door of what looked like a drawingroom sparsely furnished with lady's maids. It was all white and pink, it was elegant with determination, and, in spite of the languid black lady's maids, uncomfortably naked. One of them minced in careful elegance to Superintendent Bell. "You wish perhaps to see, Moddam?" Bell gave her a card. "If you please." Alanguorous hand waved

"If you please." A languorous hand waved them to chairs. They were left bashful to endure the gaze and the murmurs of the

other ministrants.

But not for long. The languorous hand beckened from the door. They were put into a little office where an ample dark woman sat at her desk. She looked more French than a housewife in a French comic paper. She spoke the English of the City.

"I suppose you want to see me about Miss Gray! Quite at your service. She's left me in the lurch, that's all there is to it. The last girl in the place I'd have thought would do such a thing. Here am I with a hand short in the millinery just as the season is getting busy. Too bad of her."

"Always a respectable girl, was she?"

Bell said.

"I've nothing against her. It's not my business how the girls live, but I should have said Miss Gray was quite straight. No gladeye work. She's not the type men run after. Too refined, if you know what I mean. Quite chic; oh, very chic. But no presence. A little thing and not a word to say for herself. She would never have got out of the workrooms. Still, I'm bound to say she was a good worker. She had a touch; not an artist, you know, but she could carry out an idea. Quite skilled. It is a scandal how girls treat you. Off she goes without thinking about the business. I've got to fill her place in the rush and not a day's A pretty thing!" Amélie was eloquent of the wrongs of employers.

"Yes, it's a hard world," Reggie drawled. "Have you a photograph of Miss Gray?"

"Is it likely?" Amélie glared at him.
"I suppose not." Reggie sighed and turned over some drawings on her desk, drawings of frocks.

"What do you want a photograph for?"

said Amélie with contempt.

Reggie looked up. "Sorry to disturb you. I'm thinking about Miss Gray, you see."

"I can't do anything more for you."
"I wonder," Reggie murmured, and looked

again at the drawings.

"What do you mean?" Amélie said

hercely.

"You wouldn't actually mind if we could trace Miss Gray?" Amélie was crimson

and spluttered. "Thanks very much. The artist who drew these frocks seems to be able to draw. If she's seen Miss Gray she might draw us a portrait."

"I'm sure I don't know." Amélie was subdued. "You're welcome to try."

"Yes, I thought we should be." Reggie stared at her without respect. "Give me her address. Give me your Miss Higgs too. I'll take her to help the artist."

"I'll fetch her at once." Amélie hurried

"You've put the wind up, sir," Bell said.

"Yes. Yes. Probably means nothing. I should say she's only a brute. But she annoyed me."

The large Miss Higgs fluttering with emotions was an uncomfortable companion in a car. Her disappointment in the news that they had no news struggled with the excitement of having the high powers of the police at work with her. She told them everything all over again, passionately incoherent.

The door of the artist's flat was opened by a buxom girl with a mop of black hair. "Hallo, Bertha!" She made eyes. "What's doing? Who are the little men?"

"Let's come in, may we, Miss Grant?" She bent to the girl's ear. "They're police."

"The constables came in two by two." She led the way to a little untidy room. "What's up, Bertha? Have you been getting pinched?"

"It isn't me. It's about Cely."

"The little milliner? Search me!"

"They wanted you to draw 'er, Miss Grant."

Miss Grant whistled. "Can do. What was she wearing?"

"There! I don't know."

"The clothes she would wear for a longish journey by rail or car," said Reggie, and Bell looked at him curiously.

"That'd be her grey coat—and the grey 'at," Bertha cried and explained technically.

"Righto. Plain or coloured, constable?"

"Colour for choice," said Reggie. "Gen-

eral likeness, please."

"Hold your breath." Miss Grant sat down to her desk . . . "Not so bad." She drew back from the damp portrait. best when I dash it."

"It's 'er!" Bertha cried.

Superintendent Bell surveyed it with a professional eye. "It's somebody all right."

"Yes. That's real," Reggie murmured. The little woman in it had a charming shy dignity. He bit his lip. "Thanks very much, Miss Grant. Good-bye." He hurried

"What are you going to do now, Mr. Fortune?" Bertha panted after him.
"Look for her," said Reggie. "Run

away back to Amélie. I'll let you know as soon as we know anything. Come on, Bell."

He directed the car to Scotland Yard.

Better get this photographed."

"What, you want to send copies to the papers? They'll splash it. 'Pretty young milliner missing! When did you see this face?' I don't like these stunts myself. But it's the only way."

"Oh no. We'd better get ready for it, that's all. When the photograph's taken, you can go up to Paddington with the

original."

Bell breathed hard. "That beats me," he said. "Why would I go to Paddington?"

"You would go to ask the fellows on the trains to Worcester and Cheltenham last Saturday if they'd seen that girl: and who was with her and where she got off."
"It's like dreaming, sir." Bell stared at

him. "How do you come to know she went

that way?"

"I don't. It's the best bet. Remember the picture. That's Cotswold scenery. The inference is she had some particular interest in the Cotswolds. So the first hypothesis is she's gone there. And if she went by rail she'd go by a Worcester train or a Cheltenham train."

"All right, sir. It's wonderfully clever. But I'd say it's a chance of a chance."

Reggie wriggled. "I want to be quick, Bell. Don't you see we've got to be quick?"

So Superintendent Bell went to try his luck with the railwaymen at Paddington. Reggie's car took him on to the office of the Daily Recorder. In the files of that paper he found the picture. The description, which Celia had not cut out, informed him that it was a landscape in the heart of the Cotswold Hills, between Stow-on-the-Wold and Ford. He went home and spent the afternoon in his library over books about the Cotswold country, drearily conscious of futility. No information about that pleasant land suggested why the little milliner had gone there: if she had.

In the evening Lomas surprised him bent over a map. He started up. "Hallo! Any news from Bell?"

"Ingenuous youth!" Lomas chuckled. "No, Reginald. The wretched Bell labours in vain. The Great Western Railway declines to know your little milliner. Most respectable line. He has put her picture before all that can be found of the guards and dining-car men and what not on Worcester and Cheltenham trains and they plead not guilty. Over the telephone he sounds disgruntled. He proposes to wait at Paddington to see one crew more, one lone last hope; but I infer he hasn't any. A faithful fellow. He spoils you, Reginald. You abuse his simple trust. Speaking frankly, this is chasing one of your wildest geese."

"It was a chance," Reggie mumbled.

"My dear fellow! You don't really think so?" Lomas stared. He observed the open map. It displayed the Cotswold country on a large scale. Reggie had marked off a tract: some of the highest ground, in which valleys were cut deep and with steep sides: a tract in which villages were small and few. "What is this selected desert?"

"That's where her bit of landscape is. If Bell can't trace her, I'll go down there tomorrow."

"Great heavens!" said Lomas. "My dear fellow, you're not yourself in this case. From every scrap of a fact you make a wild conjecture and take that for evidence. All your theories about the girl are outside reason. This hunt in the Cotswolds is simply fantastic."

"Oh no. No. I'm quite rational, Lomas," Reggie said wearily. "I believe evidence, that's all. You don't trust it when it's queer. My little mind likes to work on it. What's the higher intelligence

want to do? Nothing?"

"We have to look for the girl, of course. We shall probably disturb her on her honeymoon. But that's her own fault. I came round to speak to you about putting her portrait in the morning papers."

"Send it out, yes. We must try everything." His parlourmaid came in. "What

is it?"

"Miss Higgs to see you, sir."

Reggie nodded. "All right. This is the faithful friend, Lomas." And Miss Higgs

came tempestuously.

"Mr. Fortune, I've 'eard from Cely. I've 'ad a letter. Waiting for me to-night when I got 'ome. 'Ere, look. Didn't I say she wouldn't never leave me without a word?"

Reggie took the letter. It was addressed in a sketchy, jerky hand. The envelope bore the postmark London, W.2. "This is Miss Gray's writing?" he said.

"Why, Mr. Fortune, of course it is. As if I wouldn't know! It does look a bit splashy. She's kind of flustered, poor dear. But it's 'er. She's all right, thank God." Miss Higgs wiped her eyes.

The letter was written on a sheet torn from a pad. It had no address. Twice the pen made a blot. The writing was spasmodic in short uneven lines which ran down hill.

Thursday.

DEAR BERTHA,-

Don't worry about me. I was wanting to write before. Just a line to tell you not to worry. I'm all right, I'm perfectly all right, dear. I want you to tell Madame and my rooms I shan't be coming back. Can't explain now. It's like being in a dream, all that's happening. Going to be wonderful. Must stop now. I want to see you soon.

Corr.

CELIA

Reggie was a long time reading it. He gave it to Lomas. He looked at Miss Higgs. "That's like her, is it? Sort of letter

you'd expect?"

"We was always such friends. I knew she wouldn't chuck me," said Miss Higgs affectionately. "Of course, she don't say much. You can see something's come to her. She's that excited."

"Yes. Yes. That is indicated."

"Sounds likes she's come into something good, bless 'er."

"Quite," Lomas smiled. "I should say the lady's making a good marriage, Miss Higgs." He gave her back the letter.

"Well, I never did!" Miss Higgs cried.
"It does sound like that, sir. But I 'adn't a notion. She was that close! Might be some gentleman what wouldn't want it known he was marrying in the shop."

"Nothing more likely," Lomas agreed.

"Anyhow, you're quite satisfied?"

"I should say I was! She did ought to 'ave all the best. She's a lady. And look 'ow she thinks o' me!" Miss Higgs again wept.

"Very nice, very nice." Lomas was paternal. "I hope she always will. So glad it's come to a happy ending, Miss

Higgs."

"Thank you, sir." She looked at Reggie, silent and solemn, sunk in his chair. "Thank you, Mr. Fortune. I've give you a lot of trouble for nothing. And you been so kind."

"Oh no. No," Reggie mumbled. "Good night, my dear."

He heaved himself up, he got rid of her. Lomas slapped him on the shoulder. "My poor Reginald! Are we downhearted?"

"Yes, we are," said Reggie, and stared

at him with contemptuous dislike.

Lomas chuckled. "This bitterness is very painful, Reginald. I'm afraid you're spoilt. Not one of our good losers. The little milliner must be a lesson to you. Learn to respect the simple mind."

"Have you a mind?" said Reggie. "Then why not use it? You told that girl it was a happy ending. It isn't happy.

And it isn't the end."

"My dear fellow! You have a letter which her friend recognises as the girl's own writing. Do you doubt that?"

"Oh no. She wrote it."

"Good. We return to the world of reason. She said she was all right. She suggested extreme happiness. Isn't that clear?"

"No. No. She said it was 'going to be wonderful.' In the future; the present seemed to be rather hectic."

"Quite. The girl was wildly excited."

"You did notice that? Well, well. Rather vague too, wasn't she? Striking absence of information. She didn't say where she'd gone or why she'd gone or what she was doing."

"It's obvious she means to break away

from her old life."

"Yes. It could be." Reggie looked at him with large solemn eyes.

"What is the theory now?"

"Somebody's breaking her. Ever seen a letter like that before?"

"Oh, it looked a little drunk, of course." "Drunk. Yes. Drunken writing, wasn't it? Drunken thought: even to repeating she was quite all right. But I don't think she'd been drinking, Lomas. Say disorder of the nervous system."

"By all means." Lomas laughed. "Great nervous excitement. It does happen to girls when they're just married or just going to

Reggie was not amused. "Call it fright, then," he said sharply. "Can't you see that letter was written to order? Whoever has got her wants to make sure nobody shall worry about what's happening to her. And she daren't say what it is."

"Good Gad! This is an obsession. You got it into your head that the girl had had foul play and now you can't bear to be proved wrong. Look at the facts, man."

"Which?

"The letter will do, thank you. Your

wonderful theory was, the girl had been carried off to the wilds of the Cotswolds. Did you see the envelope? Postmark, London."

"Yes. W.2. I did notice it. That made me quite sure. I'm going to the

Cotswolds to-morrow."

Lomas cocked his eyebrows. Lomas stood up. "That is the limit," he said. "Good-bye. Thank you for a very pleasant evening. When symptoms of sanity return, let me know."

"Sanity! Oh, my aunt!" Reggie laughed drearily. "Don't you see the people that wouldn't let her put her address on the letter wouldn't let it be posted where she was? This little game is being played

quite carefully."

"Oh, you can spin theories till all's blue. Why should they let her write at all?"

"Dear Lomas!" Reggie sighed. "To keep her friends quiet so nobody should look for her till they've done what they want. Well, she was alive on Thursday—if it was Thursday when she thought it was. This is Friday night. I wonder."

Heavy steps ran up the stairs. Superintendent Bell came in. "I've got her at last, sir," he cried. "She is down there in

the Cotswolds."

Reggie turned to Lomas. "Yes. That's that," he said.

Bell continued: "She went on the Cheltenham express last Saturday night. One of the dining-car men knew her picture at once. Knew the man she was with too. It's a young sportsman who lives down there; they often have him on the Cheltenham trains. Name of Smith-Marner. Mr. Harry Smith-Marner. He took the girl off in his own car at Cheltenham. I 'phoned the police there about him. He has a place out in the hills-Marner Grange. Lives there with his mother."

"Oh, there's a mother," Reggie murmured.

"I wonder."

"That don't look so bad, sir. This young fellow, he's well-thought-of, good sportsman. Very old family, the Marners. His pa was called Smith-made a pot of money out of soap or something. He married the Miss Marner who was heiress to this old estate and he took her name and got a knighthood. Dead a long while. Lady Smith-Marner runs the place. She's all right, they say. Don't forget she's somebody. No children but this young man."

"I see no sign of crime, Reginald," Lomas smiled. "The heir of all the Marners wants his wife to get away from the shop, that's all."

"You think so? Well, well. I wonder what Celia thinks by now?"

"Meaning to go down, sir?" said Bell.

"No more trains to-night."

"No. No." Reggie looked at his watch. "My only aunt!" he moaned. "I've had no dinner. One small swift dinner and early to bed. And then the car at dawn. Oh, my hat! You'd better sleep here, Bell."

"What on earth do you want to do?"

Lomas cried.

"I want to see the girl." Reggie looked up with a certain ferocity on his amiable face. "Any objection? I'm going to see the girl—alive or dead."

"Still at it!" Lomas sighed. "All right. If you will go mare's-nesting!" In the doorway he turned. "Try to keep him out of trouble, Bell—but should Lady Smith-Marner tell him off, let her rip."

Pale and glum in the early morning light, Reggie climbed into his car and slid deep under rugs. Superintendent Bell tucked him up paternally and the big car purred away through the shut, silent town. . . . Bell's pipe fell from an opening mouth. Bell was soothed to massive slumber, but Reggie fidgeted. Reggie watched the fleeting miles drearily wakeful. . . . Spring sunshine broke through the grey sky, the towers of Oxford stood clear, the car slowed for the High Street amidst a ringing of chapel bells. Bell woke and gaped. "Ah! Bless my Here already. Rare fine town, soul! sir."

"Go to sleep," Reggie growled. "We aren't anywhere."

The sprawling suburbs were left behind; they made speed through flat meadowland and climbed on a ridge above the hurry of a stream. The mellow stone of a little town glowed in the sunshine and was left behind; they came upon the hills, long miles of rolling bare land where no smoke stained the air, no house broke the green curves; there was no sound but of the birds and the wind. "Lonely!" Bell grunted.

Reggie fumbled for a map. "After the next village turn right," he called to the

chauffeur.

The village slept forlorn about a noble church. They turned away north and the hills broken into deeper valleys, steep slopes falling to clear, swift, brown streams edged with gold, and here and there beechwoods covered hollow and ridge.

Reggie came out of his rugs. "Look

There's Celia's picture," he said.
"Bless my soul!" Bell cried. "It is absolutely. You've hit that off, Mr. Fortune."

"Yes. I think so. And it's quite close to Marner Grange."

Through solitude they came to the stone wall of a park, to ancient gates of wrought iron. "A wolf's head. Crest of the Marners. Well, well."

Bell looked at him. "Right out of the

world they've got her, too."

"Yes. Yes. Very neatly managed. Some brains among the Smith-Marners."

Marner Grange was built under the hill, a Tudor manor-house of kindly grace in the mellow Cotswold stone. A small car stood by the porch and its chauffeur looked at them curiously. An antique butler opened the door. He was given the card of Superintendent Bell of the Criminal Investigation Department.

"Take that to Mr. Henry Smith-Marner. Tell him that I have come down from London

to see him."

"I will see if Mr. Henry is at home."

"Tell him he is," said Bell.

"This way, if you please." The butler took them out of the hall into a room which was the study of a man who did not study. There were books against the wall, a little library of field sports, a row of game books, there were rod-cases and a line of guns.

They had time to examine it before anyone came to them. At last appeared a slim youth of a pleasant, simple countenance, very fair by nature, which had become of an ashen pallor.

"I say. What's all this?" he cried.

"What have you come for?"

"Mr. Henry Smith-Marner?" said Bell heavily.

eavily.
"That's my name. What do you want?"

"The police have received information that Miss Celia Gray, employed by Amélie, Rye Street, London, disappeared in suspicious circumstances. Miss Gray was traced travelling with you to Cheltenham. I want to know where she is."

"She's here, of course. There's nothing suspicious." The young man flushed. "My mother's here. I don't know what you mean. My mother asked her down and she's been staying on."

"Is that so? Then we want to see

her."

The young man's colour faded again.

"See her?" he cried. "I say, you can't talk about a lady like that. I don't know if she ought—if she'd like—I'll have to ask my mother. I——"

The young man hurried out.

"Looks queer," Bell said. "He's got very cold feet."

"Yes. Yes. Severe mental disturbance.



"'Well, well.' Reggie bent over her. 'Good morning, Miss Gray. Harry wants me to have a look at you. My name's Fortune. A doctor, you know.'"

The door opened. "If you please, sir," the old butler spoke. "Dr. Whinney wishes to speak to you."

Him also. That's very interesting. You never know, you know. Actions and reactions. And there's a doctor about. Well,

well. I wonder if Dr. Whinney will like speaking to me."

Bell stared at him. "You're cheering up, sir. Do you reckon you see your way through it?"

"Oh no. No. It's opening out. But they're playing with souls, Bell. Not a nice game. Not at all a nice game."

He wandered away to the books, looking at one and another. Bell turned to the guns. "That young man's got the goods here." He handled them affectionately. But these diversions did not beguile the

"This won't do, Bell," Reggie said. "Dr. Whinney has too much to say. Come

In the hall the butler confronted them. "Mr. Smith-Marner is engaged, sir."

"Where?" Reggie $\mathbf{snapped}$. butler's chill horror rebuked him in silence. But through the silence he heard the young man's voice. It rose high. Bell swept the butler away. They crossed the hall to Lady Smith-Marner's drawing-room.

The door opened upon emotions. young man sat huddled; his hands hid his face and he muttered in a broken voice. His mother had her arm about his shoulders. "My dear Harry," she was saying, "my dear boy."

Two men watched with sympathy, a small sleek one who was murmuring, "My dear fellow, I am most distressed," another lanky and military who barked, "A sad business. A sad business. Have to face it, Harry. What the devil! Who are you, sir?"

They all became aware of Reggie and Superintendent Bell. The lad's pallor showed drawn and blotchy. He waved them away as if they were wraiths in the air. Lady Smith-Marner started up, a tall woman in black, white hair piled above a giant bloodless face. She bit her lip. Her lean bosom heaved. She swept upon them.

"An outrage," she said hoarsely, and her voice found strength. "This is an outrage."

No." Reggie no. met"You've made it necessary. You know who we are."

"I know nothing, sir."

"Why say so?" Reggie sighed. "Dr.
Whinney!" The smaller of the two men stood up. "My name's Fortune, Reginald Fortune. You may have heard it." The discomfort of Dr. Whinney made plain that he had. "I'm here to make a medical report on the case of Miss Grav for the Criminal Investigation Department. Any objection?"

The young man's face was distorted with fear, horror, shame. "My God! Oh, my God!" he groaned, and rushed out.

"What has affected your son, madam?"

Reggie said coldly.

How dare you!" she muttered. Her fierce eyes struck at him.

The military man swung forward. "Steady, Agnes, steady. May as well tell him. Can't be a secret, you know, damn it. Doing his duty, what? Sit down, Mr. Fortune. This is a very painful affair, sir. Sad thing for the family. Now---"

"See what the boy's up to, Bell," said Reggie over his shoulder, and Bell strode away. "Now, who are you?"

"Colonel Marner, sir. I'm Lady Smith-

Marner's cousin."

"Oh yes. Yes. Are you managing this affair for her?"

"Damme, sir, I'm the only man in the

family. Now--"

"Except her son," Reggie murmured.
"Oh yes." He swung round on the unhappy little doctor. "Now, Dr. Whinney, what are you going to tell me?"

"Really, Mr. Fortune," the doctor made mouths, "you see my position. Professional confidence—good gracious, what's

that?"

It was a thudding crash, the noise of a scuffle, a gun-shot, a fall. Reggie ran out. The smell of powder met him. Bell called, "Mr. Fortune, sir." In the room across the hall Bell was kneeling beside a young man's

"Came here and locked the door, sir. I broke in. He was getting one of his guns fixed to fire into his face. See the rod there to shove the trigger. I went for him but he had his shot. Took him somewhere up here by the neck. I don't know if he's gone, there's such a mess. These shot-gun wounds----'

A hoarse cry tore through his talk. mother had seen that wound.

"Steady, Agnes, steady," Colonel Marner admonished her. "You mustn't break, my girl. Harry don't want that."

She caught at Reggie bent working on "Is he dead?" she the senseless body. muttered.

"No. No." For a quick moment Reggie looked up at her. "But he's tried hard. You're in the way, madam. The room

clear, please. Dr. Whinney!" The little doctor came shaking . . . The wound was dressed and bound . . .

"That'll do now. I want him taken to a trustworthy nursing home. Go and tele-

phone."

"Really, I don't know, Mr. Fortune---" the doctor stammered. "Lady Smith-Marner-couldn't he remain here?"

"A nursing home I can trust. Tell 'em

to send an ambulance."

"Well, of course it is a very nasty case." The little doctor was torn with anxieties.

"Yes. Quite nasty. For everybody.

And I'm in charge."

"Certainly, Mr. Fortune. Quite so, yes. I-I will tell Lady Smith-Marner."

"Go and telephone," said Reggie sharply.

Dr. Whinney fled.

The young man lay, decently and in order now, waking to half-consciousness. "Stand by, Bell," Reggie murmured. "Don't let anybody talk to him. Tell him not to worry. Ah!" A light step was moving outside. He went to the door.

Behind it appeared the brown face of Colonel Marner. "How goes it, what?"

Reggie came out and shut the door behind him. "The boy is still alive," he said.

"You don't like the look of it, do you? Whinney's telephoning for nurses, I hear."

"No. For a room in a nursing home." "You want to take him away? His

mother won't like that, you know."

"You might explain to her, Colonel." Reggie looked at him with half-shut eyes.

"Quite so. Let's know how we stand. What's going to happen to the boy? Looked a nasty thing to me. I remember a poor chap in India—love affair, don't you know-went out shooting, put a shot into himself. Didn't look such a mess as this. But they couldn't do anything. Called it accident, of course, for the sake of his people. Only decent, what?"

"Oh, you've been in India," Reggie murmured, and his eyes opened. "Oh yes. Well, this boy ought to pull through. If he's properly cared for. That's why he's

going to a nursing home."

He turned away; he sought Dr. Whinney. The telephone was still in action. . . .

Dr. Whinney gushed apologies: very sorry for the delay: difficult to get through to Cheltenham. Unfortunately Miss Ablett's nursing home was full. But he had been offered a choice of rooms at Miss Dumaresq's: really very good: Mr. Fortune could have every confidence in her: and the ambulance should arrive in half an hour-well, an hour

at most. He did hope-

"Do you?" said Reggie. "What about the girl? Come on." He opened the door of Lady Smith-Marner's drawing-room. It appeared that the Colonel's explanations with her had been stormy. Some swift, vehement talk was suddenly hushed; she stood very close to him, gripping his arm.

She swept round upon Reggie. "Is my boy going to live?" she cried.

"I think he will live if he wants to live, madam," said Reggie slowly. "Why did he want to die?"

She bit her lip. "It is this woman," she

"A most painful affair, sir," the Colonel barked. "Most distressing, begad. The boy was infatuated with the poor creature. And she-well, well, the doctor will tell you."

"One moment. You can tell me something, madam. Why did Miss

Gray come to your house?"

"My boy wished to marry her. I had never seen her. You know what she is. girl in a milliner's shop. Harry is all I have. I told him to bring her here."

"Very generous too," the Colonel grunted. "Give the girl her chance, what?

always say you were right, Agnes." "The boy had your consent to marry her,"

madam?" said Reggie.

"Nothing was decided. When the girl came here we saw she—she wasn't well."

"Which the boy hadn't noticed before. She came on Saturday night. How soon was she ill?"

"On Sunday we thought she wasn't quite normal." Lady Smith-Marner spoke as if each word hurt her. "Very excited and noisy."

"Might have been feverish, don't you

know?" the Colonel explained.

"After that she got very strange. Sometimes in wild spirits and then depressed and sullen. She-she puzzled us very much."

"Took to seeing things, if you know what I mean," the Colonel put in. "Poor girl, she'd say 'What's that?' all of a sudden, when there wasn't really anything."

"Yes. Very painful for the boy. When

did you have the doctor?"

"I sent for Dr. Whinney on Tuesday." Reggie turned to the doctor. "Your case from Tuesday. Well?"

"I-I-it has been a very distressing

case, Mr. Fortune," the little man stammered.
"I thought possibly some nervous strain—
in the circumstances—a hysterical condition.
I found the symptoms—the symptoms Lady
Smith-Marner describes, I ordered the

patient to bed complete rest. But her condition has grown worse. The senses are disordered. There is grave mental disturbance. There are hallucinations. Her judgment of time and distance and sound is quite uncertain. I was forced to the conclusion it is a case of paranoia. I had to tell the poor boy this morning."

"You told him the girl was mad. Yes, I thought so. And now I'll see

"Certainly, Mr. Fortune." The little man looked to the lady and the Colonel for in-

her."

structions and got none. "Of course, I shall be very glad——" Reggie pointed to the door.

The room to which he was taken was vast and dim, so closely its case-

ments were curtained, so dark the

panelled walls, so gloomy the ancient furniture. In a corner he made out a four-poster bed hung with crimson. He looked at Dr. Whinney without affection. "Nice wholesome mausoleum," he muttered. He went to the window and dragged back all the curtains.

From the bedside a nurse arose, rustled forward with an important show of moving quietly and spoke in a penetrating whisper. "She's very low, doctor. The light's bad for her."

"I'll call you when I want you," said Reggie, and she retired, dwindling.

In the wide expanse of the four-poster there was a little mound. Celia lay with her knees drawn up to her body, burying her face in the pillow. "Well, well." Reggie bent over her. "Good morning,



Miss Gray. Harry wants me to have a look at you. My name's Fortune. A doctor, you know. All the way from London."

"Harry sent for you?" She turned to look at him. He saw the charming shy face of the portrait, wan and anxious, with fear haunting dull eyes.

He took her hand. "Now we're friends." His fingers moved to the pulse. "You see, I know Bertha. So I know something about Bertha's friend. And I ought to be able to find out what's gone wrong with her." He was looking close into the sunken, darkrimmed eyes. "Tell me all about things."

"You know Bertha?" she said, as if she could not believe it. A little colour came into her face.

"Oh yes. Yes. Bertha's rather a dear, isn't she? Well, how have you been feeling down here?"

She frowned. "What was that noise?"

with prim satisfaction: "I told Miss Gray it was nothing, doctor."

"She thinks I'm mad," Celia cried.

know she thinks I'm mad."

"Oh, my dear!" said the nurse. mustn't talk like that."

Reggie looked over his shoulder.



"Reggie swung round on the Colonel. 'That's all. When we want you, we'll find you,' he said.'

Dr. Whinney coughed. Dr. Whinney touched Reggie's arm. "Yes, ignorin' the doctor's silly cold," said Reggie, "which noise do you mean?"

"It was this morning. I'm sure it was this morning."

From her banishment the nurse spoke

heard all I want of you," he said sharply, and came back to the girl. "It don't matter what nurse thinks. If she can think. There was a noise, of course: an awful crash. Somebody hit a door and things fell down."

"There was! Oh, I'm so glad. I've heard things before and they said there

wasn't a sound. And afterwards I thought really there wasn't." She thrust her tumbled hair back from her brow. "Then seeing things too: they couldn't really be real.'

"Nice things?" Reggie said gently.

She blushed. "Oh—oh yes." Her voice was faint, "Only like dreams. Sort of gorgeous. Like a big scene in a theatre."

"And you were happy while you saw

"Awfully happy. Only when they're gone it's dreadful. Sort of being dead while you're alive." She looked at him and he saw the fear in her eyes darker. that's ghastly. Do you know?"

"Yes, I think so," Reggie said gently. "Now just shut your eyes a minute." His hand moved upon her. "Do you feel me touch you? Tell me if I do. Tell me where." Sometimes she knew, sometimes she felt nothing. "Eyes open. All over."

He took her hand. "Well, you know, I'm going to tell Harry not to worry about you. I'm going to tell Bertha I've got you all right. My hat! You make people rather like you, don't you? Well, I'm going to look after you. I'm going to take you away from this gloomy old room into a nursing home where you can be comfy. And you're going to be quick and get well. Now just curl up and be peaceful. I'll be back soon."

"Oh, you are nice," she said faintly.

Reggie moved to the door, beckoning the nurse after him. "Don't talk to her," said in a low voice. "Don't give her anything. If anything more happens to her in this house, I'll make you responsible." He turned to the little doctor. "Now I'll talk to you. Where's a room?"

Doctor Whinney babbled: "Certainly, Mr. Fortune, if you please. I am sure we may use this." They went into an old sun parlour. "I hope you don't think-"

"What have you been giving her?"

"Why, really-nothing but a sedative. Just a little bromide."

"Who brought that nurse in?"

"Really, Mr. Fortune. I thought it quite necessary—and Lady Smith-Marner asked me to get a nurse who could control the poor girl—be firm with her, you know, in her delusions. I was bound to agree."

Reggie contemplated the little man without affection. "Lady Smith-Marner told you she wanted a firm nurse and you agreed. Yes. Did Lady Smith-Marner tell you she wanted the girl found mad?"

"Good heavens, Mr. Fortune! Upon my word, I don't understand you."

"I was wondering if you agreed to that

"This—this is really intolerable," the little man stammered. "I'm not to be treated so. Mr. Fortune, I—I—

"Yes. You're very uncomfortable. You ought to be. You told that boy the girl was mad and he went and shot himself. And she's not mad. She's been drugged."
"Drugged?" The little man gasped.

"It's not possible. What drug?"

"Don't you know?" said Reggie. do."

"I swear I never thought of such a thing." "Yes. You haven't thought much, have you?" The sound of a car was heard. Reggie looked out of the window. "Well, here's the ambulance. We'll deliver you of your patients, Doctor." He ran downstairs.

The lad lay conscious, staring at the grave paternal presence of Superintendent Bell. "Well, young man." Reggie felt about his "Yes. I've seen your Celia. She's going to be all right, you know. Nothing to worry about. Now then." The men from the ambulance carried the lad away. "That'll do nicely. You'll take him to Miss Dumaresq's home. Tell her Mr. Fortune will be there soon. Mr. Reginald Fortune. And I want another room for a lady, a nice room. Then come back here with the ambulance for her. See? Good."

The ambulance drove off. "Mr. Fortune, if you please," Dr. Whinney twittered.

"Mr. Fortune, just a word-"

Reggie stared at him. "I don't want you any more. You may go home—and think." Reggie drew Bell into the house. thing happen while I was upstairs?"

"The boy's mother came in, sir. I said not to talk. She just looked at him, kind of ghastly. He must have seen her, but he didn't seem to. She gave a sort of groan and went away. I reckon it's hit her hard."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. He drew a long breath. "Well, let's deal with 'em." He took Bell into the drawing-room.

Lady Smith-Marner was by the window staring out. She did not choose to see him. The Colonel was more affable. "Well, Mr. Fortune, got poor Harry comfortably provided for ? That's good. You've made your examination of the girl, what? Formed an opinion?"

"Oh yes, yes. Quite a clear case.

There's only one point." He stopped. "Lady Smith-Marner!" he said sharply.

The gaunt face turned to him. The eyes were dim.

"Was it part of the scheme that Harry should be made to kill himself?"

"What the devil do you mean, sir?" the

Colonel roared.

"Oh, don't be noisy. I can see it would suit you very well if Lady Smith-Marner were left without a son. You're quite obvious. I did wonder whether his mother was ready for that too."

"I never meant—I never thought——" Lady Smith-Marner gasped. "Oh, my God,

what have you told Harry?"

"Damme, Agnes, don't let the fellow bully

you!" the Colonel barked.

Reggie watched her. "Yes. I shall have to tell him something. You couldn't bear him to marry a girl out of a shop. When you found that he wouldn't give the girl up, you asked the girl to the house in order to drug her till she seemed mad. I might tell Harry that."

Lady Smith-Marner gazed at him and her lips moved, but she did not speak. "Drugs, sir?" the Colonel barked. "Damme, you're mad yourself. Crazy impudence. An English lady don't use drugs, sir. The girl's had a doctor. He knows all about her. He——"

"Oh, the doctor," Reggie shrugged. "He was very nice and tame, wasn't he? I suppose you had reckoned up the doctor beforehand. And, as you say, it wasn't an English drug, Colonel. You mentioned you'd been in India. Very kind of you. That explained the case before I saw the girl. Do you use the stuff yourself?"

"What stuff, sir? Damme, what do you

dare to suggest?"

"Cannabis indica. I suppose you call it Bhang or Hashish."

"Never heard of it," the Colonel growled.

"Oh yes. They eat it in India. Very excitin'. You're rather excited, aren't you? We call it—hemp. Used here for other purposes, Colonel Marner."

The Colonel's eyes swelled bloodshot. He made throaty noises. "Confounded impudence—don't you bully me, sir—infernal

trick-know nothing about it."

"Oh—you coward," the woman cried.

"Mr. Fortune—he did it—we did it. It's my fault. God knows it's my fault. I hated the girl so. But he thought of this way. He had this thing—he used it. He said if we gave her enough it would make her so wild and strange Harry would think she was out of her mind and have to break it off. And the drug wouldn't hurt her really—only make her so strange that even a doctor couldn't tell, and we could trust Dr. Whinney. So I gave her the stuff. It's me, me. And Harry—oh, I wish I'd died first. I wish I were dead. I never thought it would make him——" Her voice failed.

Reggie swung round on the Colonel. "That's all. When we want you, we'll find you," he said, and the Colonel slunk out.

"Mr. Fortune," the woman said faintly,

"I never meant-"

"Not the boy's death, no. I believe that," Reggie frowned. "Only breakin' the girl's life."

"What are you going to do to me?"

"I'm not thinkin about you."

"Oh, God, if I could die!" she sobbed. "What are you going to tell Harry?"

"Yes. That's what matters," he said gently. "They must have their chance. So I'm going to give you yours. Goodbye."

THE RING OF ROSES.

T is the month, and every hedge Blazons its scarlet privilege;
And even the captives down at Kew Light up their brightest lamps for you (With, written underneath, the name, And the far countries whence they came): And it is a delight to know This rapture is a common show—That folk whom I shall never see Can share this precious thing with me, And under the one sky is curled A ring of roses round the world.

F. HANBURY.



"Shrapnel crashed over the Grand Place as the long column wound through the pitted streets, past the stark, uplifted finger of the Cloth Hall."

A VALOUR-RUINED MAN

By NORMAN REILLY RAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY S. ABBEY

•

Starling, commander of "C" Company, looked up sharply from his reading as a mud-plastered runner from Battalion headquarters pushed aside the gas curtain and entered the dugout. He handed Starling a message, and stood rigidly to attention, blinking in the candle-light, after the gloom of the trench. Starling flipped open the envelope, read the message, initialled his acknowledgment, and when the runner

departed, warmed with rum, he read it again—slowly. Then his eyes dropped to a passage in his book: a tattered copy of *Moby Dick*, a breath of the free, open sea that somehow had found its way into the winter trenches. He followed the lines.

"That immaculate manliness we feel within ourselves, so far within us that it remains intact though all the outer character seem gone, bleeds with keenest anguish at the undraped spectacle of a valour-ruined man. Nor can piety itself, at such a shameful sight, completely stifle her upbraidings against the permitting stars."

Starling's fine eyes puckered; lost themselves in the damp shadows of his cave. After a space he summoned his orderly.

"My compliments to Mr. Blake of Eleven Platoon. Ask him to report here at once."

Blake came, his pinched face red with cold, stamping, and slapping the fresh snow from his boots and trench coat. He straightened in the candle-light, essayed a smile; but his heart thumped with trepidation. Starling spoke with calculated, matter-of-fact cheeriness.

"Battalion has given 'C' Company a job—daybreak patrol to go out this morning. You're next on the slate, Blake, so you'll take it. Jerry's got a machine gun in that ruined red house at C eleven A two nine. Take eight men and a Lewis gun and shift him. You'll go with them, of course."

The younger man's head was bent. He did not look up, but the blood rushed to his face, then ebbed, swiftly leaving it pasty white. His stomach trembled with dread. He lied miserably, knowing that Starling knew he was lying, yet powerless to control himself, his shaking fingers plucking at his lips.

lips.

"I... could you... could you detail someone else, sir?... I'm not feeling just... a touch of trench fever..." Shame overcame him. "God, Starling, I can't!... Don't you see? It's not fair to the men..."

Men of Starling's caste do not recognise cowardice as such; they acknowledge only degrees of courage. Blake had been a good soldier in the early days at Loos, and after. And he was only twenty-two. Starling's gaze buoyed him up; returned to him a shred of his self-respect. He said casually:

"I'll have to send Johns, then. He likes patrols. Sorry you're not feeling fit, Blake. This is the second time, and I don't want the Company talking. Keep your teeth into it, lad—and send the Sergeant-Major down when you go up."

Blake returned to his platoon.

At dawn the patrol under Johns went out, shadowy figures crouching through the mist. An hour later they tumbled back in the fire trench, jubilant, with two casualties and five prisoners, their job well done.

At the end of its tour the Battalion was withdrawn and billeted near Poperinghe, and Starling did what he could in his quiet, unobtrusive way to buttress Blake's courage. The other's cracking nerves found strength and comfort in his company commander's steadfastness and understanding. His spirit

revived in the safety of the present, and

Starling began to have hope.

"C" Company officers messed together in the kitchen of an abandoned farmhouse. and after the drab monotony of the trenches they made their brief holiday a merry one. On the last day out of the line they sat about the dinner-table, Starling at the head, lean and bronzed, his deep kindly eyes reflecting the smile under his thin moustache. Beside him was Blake, his mind at peace in spite of the fact that they were moving up into the trenches the following night. others were Smith and Patterson, subalterns of Nine and Ten Platoons, Hyde-Bennett, who was a guest from "A" Company, and Number Twelve platoon commander, Johns. Johns was a hearty, red-faced bulk of a man whom a bullet through the vocal cords had endowed with a feminine squeak. He was a formidable and ruthless fighter, and was worshipped by his men, who called him Bloody Mary.

Hyde-Bennett, a genial Irishman, spilled

whisky into his glass.

"Nice bag of prisoners you fellows got in your raid the other morning," he said. "I was on leave last time in, but I heard about it."

Johns chuckled.

"It wasn't a raid, Major. It was a blasted patrol. Sorry we didn't get their officer, too. Let me tell you—it's rather funny. We went out at daybreak and down the sunken road that runs through our wire to the railway embankment. We hadn't gone a hundred yards when my sergeant heard something. We flopped and lay still, then I crawled up the bank and had a dekko on the other side. There was an enemy patrol, by gad, resting, and cramming themselves with wurst, or some such muck, before working up to have a peep at us. I sent the Lewis gun up the bank; then the rest of us skulked through the culvert and said good morning. You'd have laughed. They put up a scrap, of course, and it was rather sordid for a minute or two. Then their officer—only a kid he was, too-gave a squawk and legged it, off up the road. Left his men flat! You're a hell of an officer, thought I, and up the road after him. Well, I caught him.

Starling, who happened to glance at Blake,

cut in swiftly.

"Shut your mouth, Mary, and pass the whisky!"

Johns waived the interruption with a grin. "I caught him—right in the angle of the red house, and his Lüger might have been

cheese for all the use he tried to make of it. He backed into the wall, his eyes bulged out with fright, and when he saw me so close he shrieked like a guinea-pig. They heard him clear back at the culvert. I let him squeak for a second or two. Then my bullet got him "—Johns indicated a point under his left jaw—" just there. It blew a hole in his coco-nut you could——"

Starling's voice rapped out again, unmistakable in its sharp command.

"Shut up, Johns!"

The other's eyes opened wide.

"What for?" he demanded, aggrieved.
"The little stinker deserved it, didn't he, for letting his men down? Well then!—and Heavens, how I hate a quitter!"

Blake jumped to his feet, his face chalkwhite. He murmured something and his chair tumbled backward as he made for the

"Hullo! What's wrong with old Blake?"
Patterson asked.

"He's been under the weather a bit, lately," Starling told them. "Never mind him. He'll be all right presently."

him. He'll be all right presently."

Johns sympathised. "Bit of red flannel next his tummy—that's what he needs. Fine thing, red flannel. I remember one time near Mons—"

Starling found Blake in his bunk, weak with nausea.

"It's no good, sir," he moaned. "I'm done in. This trip in the line will finish me."

He buried his face in his hands. Starling sat with him until dawn, but Blake had spoken truth.

Next day blew in on the wings of an icy gale, snow-laden, and an hour after a hot midday dinner the battalion moved up. was dusk, and shrapnel crashed over the Grand Place as the long column wound through the pitted streets, past the stark, uplifted finger of the Cloth Hall and out through the Menin road to the death-haunted bog of the Ypres Salient. The wind had dropped, but snow fell steadily, in large wet flakes, each plodding infantryman moving under a little blurred canopy of white. savage thunder of gunfire was softened, the tread of the heavily burdened fighting men cushioned, by the fall, and the delicate beauty of ruined eaves, caught in the halflight, drew comment from depths beneath the cynicism in which it was phrased.

Starling fell out by the side of the pavé and watched his beloved troglodytes stumble past, laden with fighting equipment, fire-

wood, water, wire, and odds and ends of comforts and necessities for the winter trenches. He passed an encouraging word or two, then fell in with Blake as his platoon came past.

"How is it going, Don?" he murmured, almost casually.

Blake turned a white face in the gloom, shook his head, said nothing.

Starling wrapped his fingers with sane, even pressure around the other's arm, and squeezed.

"Hang on, boy," he said gently. "Keep hold of yourself. We go on Divisional rest after this trip in, and that means three weeks out of the line."

There was an under-current of thrill in his voice.

A hidden battery slammed from a near-by

copse, and Blake jumped. "Steady, man," Starling warned. "It's our own guns. Keep your teeth into it, and don't let your men down. You'll be all right."

With a last friendly grip the company commander regained his place in the column.

The battalion turned off to the right, some distance beyond the Ramparts, through a portal of twisted iron and shell-riven poplars. and out over the white open fields towards the railway dugouts and Zillebeke Lake. Men strung out into indistinct heaving files. "Shell-hole on the left . . . wire underfoot . . . wire overhead . . . shell-hole . . ." The litany of guarded warning travelled continuously back along the column. Ghostly flares quavered skyward from the front line at Hill 60 and Sanctuary Wood and Hooge. Scattered shelling began to drop in the fields behind, and just ahead, where the communication trench began. It grew heavier. Casualties occurred in the leading company. An order came back, to take cover in the near-by dugouts until the hostile fire slackened. Starling made his way along the company, passing the word; and when he came to Eleven Platoon a question jumped to his lips, quickly stifled. Blake was not with his platoon.

Starling summoned his second-in-command. "Take over, and get the company under cover," he directed. "I have a little job to do. I'll be back presently."

He watched them get under way, his mind casting about for a line of action. Panic tugged, but he stamped it down. Then, as by inspiration, he remembered that a halfmile back along their track was an abandoned gun emplacement. Swiftly he calculated

the time it would take to reach it. It was not likely the battalion would move for another half-hour, and in any case it could be overtaken in the communication trench. Starling plunged back along the battalion track.

It was quite dark, but the falling snow seemed to shed a soft aura of its own. He had a feeling of intense isolation. The waves of gunfire receded to a deep murmur, rimming the silent fields, and old trenches and straggling wire seemed to creep toward him, reaching with ghostly fingers as though in search of the reassuring presence of living man.

From somewhere close by a battery of heavy howitzers coughed, and immediately upon the reports came the quick scream and burst of an enemy shell. Starling flung himself down and dirt showered over him. It hardly had settled when another landed. and another-wide, this time, searching for the battery. Starling hurried past the danger spot. Again the rush of displaced air warned him and he dropped. Starling, in the act of getting to his feet, checked himself suddenly, regardless of another warning scream. The concussion knocked him headlong, but he scrambled upright and raced toward a faint glimmer of light that he had seen issuing from beneath the ground. A light in these old gunpits, deserted by all but scavenging rats, meant one thing only.

He fell heavily into the remnant of trench and ran along it, looking for an entry. He found it, by tumbling down a short flight of broken steps into a low vaulted cellar with part of the roof blown away.

Blake was sitting on an ammunition box in the flickering light of a candle-stump, his equipment strewn on the ground about him. His eyes, black pools of utter defeat, stared with grim and awful purpose down the barrel of his Service pistol.

Wordlessly Starling hurled himself forward and clapped his left hand over the muzzle. The weapon roared. A thin curtain of biting smoke arose between them and Starling raised his shattered hand. Blake swayed stupidly to his feet and reeled backward, then jerked upright, his face a mask of horror in the candle-light. "Oh, God, what have I done!" he gasped.

Starling set his jaws in agony, and fumbled for his field-dressing. He managed words. "Don't waste time! Get your equipment on and get back to your platoon. It's at railway dugouts. Move, man!"

Frantically, inadequately, he tugged at his tunic. Where was that bandage?

Blake stumbled toward him, half crying. "Here—let me do it," he mumbled. Half-way he stopped and his head jerked up. "Get down, Starling!" he screamed, and bore him to the floor. Dimly, Starling was aware of his interposing flesh. The gunpit dissolved in a moil of stone dust and flame.

The President of the Court had read the

charge.

"The accused, Captain John Anthony Starling, Second Battalion, the Royal Murkshires, is charged with misbehaviour before the enemy in such manner as to show cowardice, in that he, at Ypres, when his battalion was proceeding for duty in the trenches, did absent himself without leave.

"Two: That he did, subsequent upon the above occurrence, commit upon himself a self-inflicted wound, with intent to evade

duty with his battalion."

The room was still. A hard, driving rain, that froze as it fell, assailed the tall windows of the château. The poplars in the court-yard creaked and swayed before the late winter gale. Like surf against iron cliffs, the sullen diapason of gunfire penetrated the room, punctuated by nearer thuddings. The embers in the grate settled with a little rustle, the flame leaping rosily over the heavy furniture. Then it subsided.

Starling wrenched his mind from futilities; from the throbbing flesh under his bandage: from the utter impossibility of defence against this monstrous charge. His eyes rested, in turn, upon the President of the Court; an impassive face, not unkind, with a touch of crisp grey at the temples, and on his broad chest four rows of Service decorations; the Judge-Advocate, toying with a ruler, small and dark, conveying, despite his atmosphere of Inns of Court, a certain pawky humour; members of the Court, all of a type—Service-worn khaki, incisive lips, clear, health-flushed skins, and about their eyes the tell-tale crow's-feet of days and nights of bloody vigil in the trenches. Men of Starling's own kind. His eyes came to rest on the Prosecutor.

Captain Neylan was an oldish man—a combatant officer lately promoted to Staff. The War had interrupted his brilliant career as a prosecuting lawyer whose fetish was "facts." And when he had piled up sufficient facts of the right sort, the culprit inevitably was imprisoned or hanged. In



"'The accused, Captain John Anthony Starling, Second Battalion, the Royal Murkshires, is charged with misbehaviour before the enemy."

Neylan's life sentiment did not exist. One was guilty or one was not, and facts do not lie. Besides separating him from his career, the War had told upon his temper. There was a trace of acidity in his thin, infrequent smile, and, as he definitely disapproved a

Even as he said it, Starling realised its uselessness. If only he could meet these men in the easy atmosphere of a regimental mess. How quickly he could make them see. Here, they were emotionally suspended; gripped in the impersonal func-

tioning of a legal machine. He had to admit facts. And facts were damning. Listen! The Prosecutor was elaborating the charge.

"While under fire on the way to the trenches accused disappeared. He re-

the hand was less than one inch from the muzzle of the weapon. We have the evidence of Captain Starling's subalterns and second-in-command as to his absence. It was reluctantly given, but it is there. One alone did not testify—an unfortunate young



appeared later at the regimental aid post with a pistol bullet through his left hand. Mark that, gentlemen; a pistol bullet far behind the front line. Prisoner states that it was not self-inflicted. Medical evidence says that the wound was received when

officer named Blake, who is presumed to have been totally destroyed by a shell while the regiment was moving up. We must not ignore the character evidence of the prisoner's battalion commander that Captain Starling was a competent and courageous officer, even though the witness displayed rather more warmth in rendering his evidence than was justified. Undoubtedly, Captain Starling was a keen soldier; still, there are the facts, which the prisoner himself does not deny. There were no actual witnesses of the deed, of course, but when circumstantial evidence is so strong guilt must be presumed."

The President leaned forward.

"Have you anything to say, Captain

Starling?"

Starling thought deeply. He thought of his battalion; and somewhat of himself. But mostly he thought of Blake, who, not too late, had redeemed himself.

"I can only say, sir, that I did not try to evade duty with my battalion; and I did

not shoot myself."

"That is all the defence you offer?"

"That is all."

The Prosecutor sensed the feeling of the Court. Starling's manner had told. He shot forward his jaw.

"Why were you absent from your bat-

talion at such a time?"

"I was on a self-imposed mission involving

the honour of my battalion."

The Prosecutor permitted himself a smile in the direction of the President; but that old connoisseur of men was intent upon the prisoner.

The Prosecutor continued:

"What was that mission?"

"I decline to answer."

"I insist!"

The President of the Court turned from his contemplation of Starling's pale, firm lips.

"Captain Starling has told us that it involves a question of honour," he said, very quietly.

The Prosecutor flushed deeply. He re-

turned to the attack.

"Your wound was not self-inflicted?"

" No."

"Was it accidental?"

" Yes."

"Was it done by human agency?"

" Yes."

"Who did it?"

"I decline to say."

"You mean, that knowing your very life may depend upon giving the Court that information, you still decline?"

Starling breathed deeply. His knuckles

whitened.

"Yes. I decline!"

The windows shook in their frames under

the distant drumfire. Somewhere a tiny clock tinkled the hour.

"That will do, Captain Neylan," the President said.

Sentence for cowardice in war-time is not always death. Much is left to the discretion of the Court, and much is taken into account. And a recommendation for mercy invariably brings results. Men have escaped with imprisonment for life, or for lesser terms, and even upon occasion have been set free, to return to the contempt of their fellows.

Starling was cashiered. And, being the type of man he was, he immediately enlisted as a private in a line regiment, under his own name. When he returned to France he was a corporal. Among the slag-heaps and shell-craters of Lens Sergeant Starling led the remnant of his platoon in bloody assault against a strong point, carried it, and held it against cruel counter-attacks for sixteen rather heroic hours. Then promotion's bony finger moved, and John Anthony Starling was again an officer and, quaint thought, a gentleman.

It was shortly after that he once more met the Prosecutor, who was then Staff Major of a neighbouring brigade. There was nothing much to the meeting, really. Neylan was a visitor to Starling's battalion mess and was discussing a point of training with his host when Starling entered the room.

"To my mind," the host was saying, over a glass of whisky-soda, "the Lewis gun has been of great value in teaching the men—hello! Here's Starling! Come here, John.

I want you to meet—"

"Yes," interrupted Neylan thoughtfully, gazing through Starling into infinity. "The Lewis gun is a useful weapon. So, for that matter, is the Service pistol—in the proper hands. You can't get away from that fact."

That is all there was to it; but Starling, being the dull, obstinate fellow he was, applied for and was granted a transfer to a battalion in Neylan's brigade, just in time to take punishment in the epic fight for Gravendaele Ridge.

Ponderous howitzers squatted in the mud and roared, endlessly. One lone planked road stretched over the morass, bracketed by bursting shells. Shell-holes, filled to the brim with stinking water, and the only home the weary fighters knew, were churned by high explosive into a revolting bog that stretched into the dusk as far as eye could see. The ridge, grey and brooding in the rain and the murk, stood a grim barrier against further progress. At its feet glistened the viscid pools where men had died in thousands in the fruitless morning attack. Enemy wire, cunningly laid under mud and water at the foot of the slope, had entangled the infantrymen as they rushed forward to the assault. What hope for human life under the murderous fire from the crest, and the rolling barrage that immediately dropped on them and smashed them in their helplessness, until hope was not, and terror was numb, and only speedy oblivion was prayed Those of the attackers who were not shot to bits had drowned in the mud. And now it was night, and Brigade headquarters was frantic.

The situation at the front was obscure. enemy shell-fire methodically destroying communication and roads as fast as they were laid. And until definite information was forthcoming it was impossible to plan another attack. There were rumours that part of a battalion had got through the swamp and was cut off and fighting desperately on the ridge all day and until long after nightfall. Neylan, who had gone forward to glean what he could of information, found himself at two o'clock in the morning in an improvised dugout of the Signal Corps—a reeking hole in the mud with a battalion commander of the Aberdeens. The place was being pounded by high explosive. The telephone buzzed madly, and the signaller appeared to be in

"What's the matter?" Neylan snapped. "Who's trying to get through?"

The man turned a perplexed face.

"You'd better take it, sir. I can't make out what they're driving at."

Neylan snatched the headpiece; listened; questioned briefly. Then he jumped up and turned to the infantry commander.

"It's a forward observation post, reporting signals from the face of the ridge with an electric torch, sir. Some lunatic is defending a pillbox he captured this morning against continual attacks. How he got his men through that ghastly swamp Heaven knows. Let's go up forward and see what it's all about."

In a lull between bursts they got to the top. There was rain, and icy darkness, but the road gave them direction, and twenty minutes brought them to the front line, a series of shell-holes thinly held by machine gunners, huddled, soaked, and shivering, but alert, under inadequate tarpaulins. One of

their officers, a young man, who seemed to see like a cat in the dark, pointed into the gloom ahead.

"It was directly in front, and near the top of the ridge, I judge, that the signal came," he told them as they splashed about in the uncertain foothold. "I think—there it is again!"

Out of the dark and the rain and the sinister loom of the great ridge came a series of flashes—pinpoint dashes and dots of light.

"It's Morse—S.O.S.!" the machine gunner said.

Desperately the little garrison in the beleaguered pillbox sent their message into the night.

HOLDING PILLBOX NEAR CREST 100 YDS WEST OF ROAD stop THIRFEEN ALL RANKS stop AMMUNITION LOW stop BELIEVE ENEMY STRENGTH LIGHT stop CAN GUIDE SUPPORTS UNDER COVER DARKNESS THROUGH SWAMP FOR DAWN ATTACK AND SMASH HIS DEFENCE stop I WILL MEET SUPPORTS CRATER PILLBOX YOUR EDGE OF SWAMP AT FIVE OCLOCK AM stop GOD SAKE COME stop.

The light flashed again, once or twice, evidently the beginning of a signature; faded, to a tiny indecipherable glow; then blackness.

"Battery gone!" the Aberdeen colonel grunted. "Heaven, he's a soldier, whoever he is! I heard that nearly a company had got cut off up there. Only thirteen left. What can we do?"

Representing Brigade, the decision was Neylan's. He thought rapidly.

"We'll use your battalion, sir," he said.
"They're fresh, comparatively, and they are close at hand. It may be only a trick, of course, but we'll have to chance that. If we can get a battalion through that swamp and into a jumping-off place on the slope, we should take the ridge an hour after dawn. Lord, what a chance, after that awful mess of yesterday!"

"You'll find us ready," the Highlander replied curtly.

"I'll have Brigade take steps to follow us up, then. The Aberdeens had better move into position on the left of the plank road, about five hundred yards in rear of Crater Pillbox. Then you and I will move up and meet this fellow and make sure of things before we commit ourselves."

An hour and a half later the kilted Aberdeens, heads bent to the pelting downpour,

plodded through mud and darkness toward the ridge. No talking, no smoking, was the order, and the hardened, dour, fighting men moved in purposeful silence. At their head Neylan and their battalion commander stumbled and splashed, keeping direction with utmost difficulty. Incessant flashes of gunfire played like sheet lightning through the dripping night, and occasionally the column was halted by bursts of heavy but sporadic shellfite ahead. They arrived in position, and company by company the battalion disposed itself in shell-holes.

"If you are ready, sir," Neylan then said, "we'll take a couple of runners with us and carry on to Crater Pillbox. This brush track runs right past it. There will be plenty of time to send word back to the battalion if it is to move up."

Two battalion scouts were detailed to accompany them and the little party ploughed on. After a time one of the scouts reported a deeper smudge in the blackness—Crater Pillbox. And as they swung slightly to the right and made for it they saw it suddenly ringed by dull-glowing spots of bursting flame.

An express train hurtled overhead and dropped. A shower of mud and debris pelted them. Three more. A full salvo in all. Up to their necks in waterlogged shell-holes they took cover. Crump!

Crump!-Crump! Crump!

A barrage fell on them. The tortured earth spouted fountains of mud and steel and flame. The din was colossal. the bursts Neylan heard the deep groans of someone badly hit. He shouted, and his mouth was stopped by flying mud. Desperately he floundered out of his shell-hole, reckless of the whistling death all about, and groped blindly through the uproar, searching for his companions. They were gone. Himself only, left. He staggered blindly forward in the direction of the concrete pillbox; felt the cobbles of a road beneath his floundering boots. With red fury, destruction rained from the sky, and by a hundred miracles he escaped it. Where was that cursed pillbox? It was cover. He had to find cover. His whole instinct of selfpreservation was bent upon it; yet it could not drive completely from his mind a thought of that desperate leader of a forlorn hope waiting for his supports.

Out of the screaming blackness a shellburst showed him a glimpse of a dugout entrance in a pulverised trench. He dived into it, headlong, and scrabbled his way down the rubbish-littered shaft. He knew it for one of the jumping-off places of yesterday's attack. Here for a time he would find safe harbour, if a direct hit did not land on the exit and bury him alive. When the storm had cleared he would carry on. Bruised and terribly shaken, he scooped the streaming muck from his eyes and face. earth above and around him trembled and rocked under the impact of huge projectiles. He fumbled for a match to see his watch, and unheeding cut his finger on the broken crystal and twisted metal guard. Well, he could guess the time; and that fellow would have to wait. Nothing could live in that hurricane of steel above. He crouched, with thumping heart, as part of the wall fell in and the stout roof timbers cracked under the burst of a shell. Heaven, that was close! So was that! Another of those, and he'd be done for, beneath thirty feet of earth.

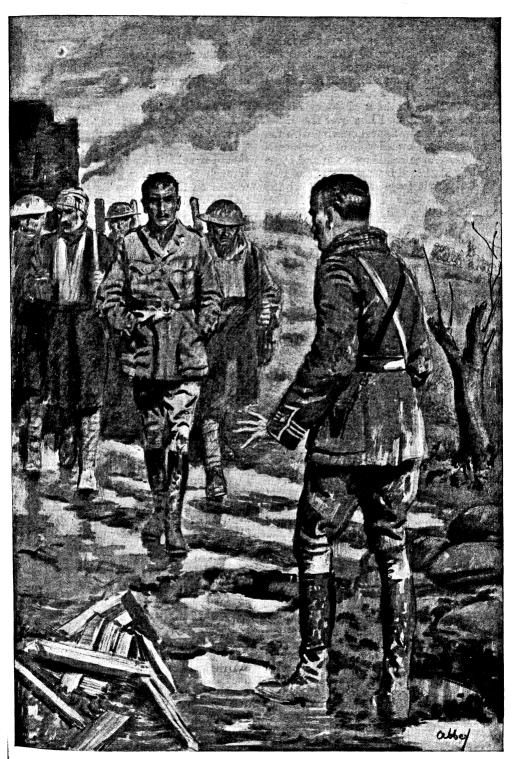
He listened; and presently his trained ears told him of the gradual slackening of the barrage. It was just a routine strafe, probably, put down on the chance of catching troops moving up to attack. How narrowly the Aberdeens had missed it! And their colonel . . .

Better get out of this and on with his job. It must be after five. He wondered if the other man had lived through it. In the sound shelter of the pillbox, probably he had. Outside, was comparative quiet now. Here goes!

Painfully he clawed his way up, over the loose rubbish and more noisome wastage of the battered shaft, and had almost gained the top when the concussion of a shell-burst in the trench outside blew him back and cracked his skull against a beam. He rolled over and lay motionless half-way down the shaft.

The watery light of early morning was pouring through the narrow entrance when Neylan's swimming brain fought its way back to consciousness. He staggered to his feet and crept by agonised degrees toward the open, one thought only dinning through his confused mind; a thought that somehow took him in the pit of the stomach like a blow. It was full day, almost, and what of the attack? Outside, he straightened with difficulty, and looked about him.

Behind, was a vast churned sea of earth, thousands of shell-pools reflecting the steel-grey sky. Dazed, incredulous, he saw dots of horses and ammunition limbers and guns and infantrymen moving forward, a host of them, crawling across the mud. He



"They were the lone survivors of the ridge; and their leader was Starling."

turned to the ridge. Its crest was a feather of spouting flame; but on the near slope tiny khaki blobs worked upward in battle Stunned, he watched them as formation. they disappeared in small groups into the smoke of the crest, supported by the thundering fire of a thousand guns. And as his haggard unbelieving eyes swept the foreground to the grim bulk of Crater Pillbox he saw coming toward him over the pitted road five scarecrow figures, moving with the shambling, limp-armed gait of utter weari-They were caked in blood and slime and their blackened faces were those of men who had dwelt long in the valley of the shadow. At their head marched one, helmetless, taller, and more ragged than the rest, whose uncertain feet were kept to the road only by force of an indomitable will, and whose eyes, red holes in a mask of clay, burned with an unquenchable light. Nevlan did not need to be told. They were the lone survivors of the ridge; and their leader was Starling.

The former Prosecutor sickened with terrible realisation of his own position. His duty had been to keep the rendezvous at all cost. He had failed. While these men and their mates had been fighting and dying like gods, and depending on him for rescue, he had been safe under cover. And Starling, whom he had once nailed to the cross with "facts," had caught him creeping out of a dugout, hours after the danger had passed.

When Starling halted, his men dropped their rifles and sprawled on the muddy road to rest. Their commander stood upright, swaying gently on widely planted legs. Neylan felt his eyes upon him, and the hot colour surged to his face and neck. What could he say? How could he plead?

Urgently, he felt the need of pleading.
But when he raised his head Starling's eyes were not on him. They were turned to the battle-torn heights beyond. And when their eyes did meet the ragged soldier's eyes were washed clean of all but a transcendental happiness.

"Look, Neylan; look, man, look!

They've taken the ridge!'

A gusty sigh that came from his innermost heart blew through the cracked lips. "It's a miracle, really! Last night . . . that barrage. I knew you couldn't get through it. But my chaps were waiting for me on the ridge, so I dodged through, and by amazing luck stumbled over the colonel of the Aberdeens. He was badly cracked up, and thought you were killed, but he told me where his battalion was. found 'em, and after the fire lifted we moved up. I had blasted a way through the swamp with bombs, and it served. The Aberdeens got into position with the rest of the Brigade to back 'em—thanks to your work, I'm told. And after we'd seen the attack get under way . . . well, here we are. We've dwindled a bit, but we're all more or less sound. What happened to you, though? Knocked out? I thought you had been. Tough, missing the fun, eh? By the way -do you happen to have a tot of rum in your bottle? My fellows here . . ."

The Staff man cried out:

"Good Heavens, you don't understand, man! While you were doing my job and your own too, I was deep in a dugout. Safe. Never mind the reason. You caught me coming out. I've got to face facts... especially after the way I hounded..."

"Facts? To hell with facts," said Starling, equably. "I asked you if you

had any rum."

BLACK CURRANT.

THE scent of the black currant, in the Spring, When first the wrapped-up buds are opening, Spreading their creased palms out from winter's night In ecstasy to feel warm strands of light, Fills me with rapture that is more than sense—It is the magic touch of innocence.

Ah! I see cherubs with incense animate Swinging their censers. Their course is intricate. Between the bush and me there is a cup—A loving, mystic cup with life brimmed up. We both imbibe of this essential force, Singing to gods, and God, consummate source.

BORROWED FEATHERS

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY E. WELCH RIDOUT

NTO the outer office of Mr. Hilary Faythorne, towards noon on a bright morning of early autumn, came Miss Nancy Faythorne, uninvited and unannounced, as was her queenly habit; and it was as if the sun had suddenly seen fit to shine into that gloomy room.

Said Miss Faythorne, pausing, a dream of

beauty, in the doorway:

"Good morning, Mr. Ross. Good morn-

ing, Mr. Mason."

As one man the articled clerks uprose and bowed to her, each after his own fashion—Mr. Thomas Ross bobbing his head in the manner of one afflicted with St. Vitus's dance, Mr. Frederick Mason bending ele-

gantly from the waist.

"I come," said Miss Faythorne, "like the Greeks, bearing gifts. Well, invitations, anyway." She crossed the room, perched upon the edge of Tommy Ross's desk, and smiled kindly down upon the bedazzled youth. "Two for you, Mr. Ross—no less. Firstly, Cynthia Langley bids you to her party to-night. As I shall be there, no refusal can be entertained. Nine p.m. Tails are indicated, I understand."

Tommy Ross turned puce in the face and emitted clucking sounds, indicative of embarrassed delight. He was a shortish, sturdy youth, unhandsome but of a dependable aspect. Never a brilliant conversationalist, in the presence of Miss Faythorne he became to all intents and purposes a voiceless imbecile, a yammering zany; and for the obvious reason. Like the washerwoman in the ballad, Tommy long had worshipped from afar, ardently but with no great hope; for between a penurious articled clerk and the cherished daughter of an affluent solicitor there is a great gulf fixed. Tommy was a reasonably frequent and welcome visitor

to the Faythorne home, but he knew well enough that there were limits beyond which he might not go. Never before, for example, had he been privileged to tread a measure with Miss Faythorne, and the prospect of so doing numbed his vocal cords and filled his soul with joy.

"Secondly," pursued Miss Faythorne, "to-morrow is my party—my twenty-first-birthday party. You are hereby instructed to attend, Mr. Ross. And so are you, Mr.

Mason. Any time after nine."

"Er—," said Mr. Ross.

"Thank you, Miss Faythorne," said Mr.

Mason. "I shall be delighted."

Appreciably older than Tommy Ross was Mr. Mason, and of a very different type. A dark and graceful young man, urbane, polished, man-of-the-worldly; yet reticent concerning his own affairs, keeping himself to himself. Popular locally nevertheless, by reason of certain useful accomplishments—a measure of skill with the piano, an admirable tenor voice, a quite exceptional aptitude for amateur theatricals. Withal an industrious, sober, respectable young man, whose devotion to duty Mr. Faythorne viewed with an approving eye.

"Good!" said Miss Faythorne, sliding from the desk. "Then I can count on you both." She moved to the door and there turned for a parting word. "And I shall see you to-night, Mr. Ross. Au revoir."

She was gone; and for a space thereafter Tommy Ross sat as one in a trance, gazing vacantly at nothing and smiling an unbelievably fatuous smile. But on a sudden he started violently and the smile vanished, giving place to an expression of profound dismay.

"Good Lord!" he said. "I can't go! Tails, she said—and I haven't a dress-suit!"

"Hire one," said Mason, without looking

up from his work.

"Eh? By Jove," said Tommy, brightening, "I never thought of that! Can I? Where?"

"Tapscott's, in East Street."

"By Jove!" said Tommy again. "But—can I? I mean, will it look all right? Not all moth-eaten and

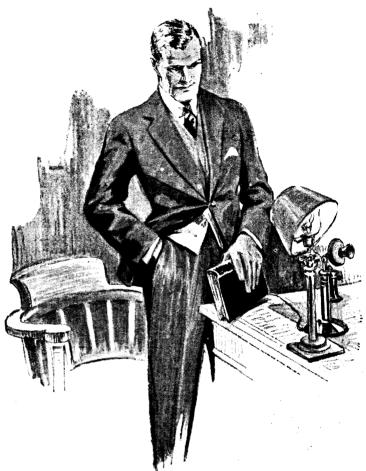
"I've done it myself," said Mason, "before now."

"Oh, good enough," said Tommy, reassured. "I'll pop round at lunch-time, then. Thanks for the tip."

At lunch-time, therefore, behold young Mr. Ross popping round to the modest tailoring establishment of Mr. Tapscott. The latter, rather diffidently interrogated, admitted that he did on occasion oblige gentlemen with the loan of a dresssuit. There followed a consultation in camera, money changed hands, and young Mr. Ross departed, the richer by a large brown-paper parcel, and the poorer by Mr. Tapscott's slightly optimistic estimate of its worth. . . .

Now one of the drawbacks to a hired dresssuit—particularly if the said suit happens to be a shade too small for comfort—is that it is apt to stimulate the inferiority-complex of its wearer. Consequently it was a somewhat apprehensive and bashful young man who, at nine o'clock of that same evening, sidled unobtrusively into the crowded ballroom at Langley Lodge. Two full hours had Tommy spent upon his toilet, and the result was not unpleasing; but to his anxious imagination it seemed that the origin of his raiment must shameful immediately be apparent to every member of this well-dressed company. was standing uncomfortably by the door, wondering what to do with his hands, when a light step sounded beside him and a voice said in his ear:

"Oh, there you are, Mr. Ross. Punctual as ever."



Tommy turned, perceived Miss Faythorne, and uttered a loud gasp of mingled relief and admiration.

"Oh—hullo!" he said thankfully. "I—I was looking for you." He paused, drew a long breath and added: "May I—shall we——?"

"I'd love to," said Nancy, smiling.

So they danced. At this form of exercise Tommy was a dogged rather than a brilliant performer, but his partner's sylph-like ability more than atoned for his shortcomings. All too soon the music ceased, and Tommy, descending from the seventh heaven, reluctantly relinquished his precious charge.

"By Jove!" he said. "That was ripping! For me, anyway," he added

modestly.

"Me, too," said Nancy kindly. "Now I must go and—— Oh, my necklace!"

Something fell with a faint clatter to the floor at her feet—a long string of pearls,

For the ingenuous countenance of her partner had suddenly taken on an expression of the gravest perturbation; a light perspiration bedewed his brow, and with one hand



beautifully matched and graduated. Tommy stooped, picked up the gaud and restored it to her.

"Thanks," said Nancy. "If I lost that, I don't know what— Look, the clasp's broken. Now, what shall—what's the matter, Mr. Ross?"

he appeared to be fearfully exploring his back.

"Oh—nothing," he said hastily. "It's —it's quite all right."

For a moment Nancy stared at him; then her keen woman's wit grasped the situation. She drew nearer and lowered her voice.

"Something given way?" she hazarded. Tommy hesitated, purple with shame; then, realising the futility of evasion, he nodded miserably. This, he reflected bitterly, was just the kind of thing that would happen to him.

'My coat," he said dully. "I felt it give

when I bent down."

"Let me look," bade Nancy. "Yesit's split up here near the arm. But I can patch that for you. Come along."

Thus for the next ten minutes young Mr. Ross sat, shirt-sleeved and adoring, in an adjacent ante-room, what time the expert fingers of his lady worked skilfully upon his damaged garment. At length:

"There!" she announced. hold for to-night. But I'd get it mended properly by a tailor to-morrow before it

spreads."

"Thanks awfully," said Tommy, his voice with emotion. "You're

brick!"

"And now," said Nancy, frowning, "what shall I do with my necklace? I can't wear it, and I've no pockets, and my bag isn't safe. . . . I wonder if you'd look after it for me, Mr. Ross, till the end of the evening ? "

"Rather!" said Mr. Ross. If she had asked him to look after a herd of elephants or a couple of maiden aunts he would have assented no less eagerly. He accepted the necklace, enfolded it in his handkerchief and bestowed it tenderly in his tail-pocket.

"Thanks so much," said Nancy. "You'll remember not to sit on it, won't you? Now

we'd better rejoin the revels."

For young Mr. Ross the remainder of the evening consisted of long periods of boredom, punctuated by brief moments of ecstasy, which were the occasions when he took the floor with Nancy. Time passed, and went on passing; night yielded to day, and the guests began to take their leave; and at last it was borne in upon Tommy that he could no longer postpone his own departure. Seeking out Nancy, with intent to offer himself as escort, he found her in the company of his hostess and half a dozen others, so that no privy speech with her was possible.

"That's nice of you," she said, in answer to his timorous suggestion, "but I've decided to stay the night here with Cynthia. Gracious, I'm tired! . . . Good night, Mr. Ross.

Don't forget to-morrow."

So that was that; but all the way home Tommy walked as if on air, ever and again singing a little. For had he not danced six times with Nancy, and was he not to dance with her again upon the morrow? Life, he

felt, was tolerably good.

This feeling of beatitude was still strong within him when, a few hours later, having slept and breakfasted, he set forth to the day's labour. On the way he visited Mr. Tapscott, displayed the damaged coat and emphasised the necessity for a swift repair. Mr. Tapscott, at first inclined to suspect that his client had done it a-purpose, was finally mollified and promised instant actionadding, however, that all this here would have to be charged for, in a manner of speak-

Bidding him charge his worst, Tommy sped thence to the office, where he was a little surprised to find no sign of Mr. Mason, in whom the early-to-work habit ordinarily amounted almost to a vice. This phenomenon was presently explained by Mr. Faythorne, when at his appointed hour that gentleman put in an appearance.

"Morning, Ross," said Mr. Faythorne, who was stout and bald and wore a worried look. "Mason won't be in to-day. I've sent him to Rilborough about the Timson

mortgage."

He passed into his private sanctum, and peace descended upon the outer office. And for a considerable period young Mr. Ross sat idle at his desk, thinking of matters unconnected with the law; from which agreeable reflections he was suddenly roused by the shrill clamour of the telephone-bell.

"Hullo," said Tommy to the instrument. Is that you, Mr. Ross?" said a voicea voice that caused him to blush richly and

quiver like a sapling in a gale.

"Oh—good morning, Miss Faythorne. hope you-"

'How is your memory this morning?"

"My memory?"

"Well, what about my necklace?"
"Your neck——" Tommy's voice wavered and died away; he gave a little gasp and sat as if frozen to his chair.

"I was so tired last night," went on the voice, "that I forgot all about it. And so did you. You haven't lost it, I hope?"

"Oh yes—no—it's—it's quite all right. Idiotic of me to forget it. I'm frightfully sorry. I—

"Well, don't forget to bring it to-night, will you? I must fly now. Au revoir, Mr. Ross."

Tommy replaced the receiver with a shaking hand and sat for a moment staring blankly into space. Then he grabbed the telephone-directory, sought and found a certain number, and seized the instrument again. And after the usual interval:

"Hullo-ullo!" he said urgently. "Mr. Tapscott? Mr. Ross speaking. Look here—about that coat. I've just remembered——"

Across the wire the voice of Mr. Tapscott was borne to him:

"I'm sorry, sir, but there's been a bit of a mix-up over that coat. It's gone, if you follow me."

" G-gone?"

"It's like this, sir. Just after you brought it in, I had to pop out for half an hour on a matter of business. While I was out a gentleman come in, wanting to borrow a dress-coat. Well, young Arthur—that's my assistant, sir—thinking you'd finished with it, and not knowing nothing about the damage to same, on account of not being in the shop when you come in, he lets the gentleman try it on, and it fitted all right, so the gentleman took it away. A chapter of accidents, sir, in a manner of speaking. But I can fix you up with——"

At Mr. Ross's end of the wire there was heard a loud thud, indicating that Mr. Ross had fallen back in his chair in the manner of one smitten violently upon the occiput with some blunt instrument. And then the voice of Mr. Ross, faint, trembling and utterly aghast:

"But, good Lord, man—I left something in the pocket! In the tail-pocket—something valuable! Didn't the fool turn out the pockets before he let it go?"

"That's usually done, sir, of course. I'l

just inquire."

A pause, while Tommy gnawed his thumb, perspired freely and thought unutterable

thoughts. Centuries later:

"You there, sir? I'm sorry, sir, but young Arthur didn't think to look in the pockets, thinking I'd done so previous, and the gentleman being in a hurry. But it'll be all right, sir. The gent—"

"Who is he?" croaked Tommy feverishly.

"Where does he live?"

"Name of Mason, sir. Gentleman as works in your office, I understand, sir. He told young Arthur as he wanted to wear the coat to-night, and as he was going away all day on business he'd take it with him and change in the train coming back, sir."

"Mason!" said Tommy, surprised and not a little relieved.

"That's it, sir. So you'll get your pro-

perty back all right, I'm sure. Will you be wanting another coat to-night, sir?"

"Eh? Oh yes," said Tommy absently.

"I'll call for it."

He hung up the receiver and relapsed into earnest thought. The situation was still extremely delicate, but it was at least consoling to know that the necklace had passed into a friend's keeping. Somehow he must contrive to meet Mason and recover the trinket before presenting himself at the Faythorne home; and this did not appear a task of any particular difficulty. From what he had learned of his colleague's intentions, it was to be assumed that Mason would return from Rilborough upon the only possible train—the 7.10, due in at 8.25. It followed, therefore, that nothing could be done for the time being; he must possess his soul in patience for another nine hours at least.

And this, to the best of his ability, he did. But the suspense played havor with his nervous system, though in the lunch-hour he relieved his feelings to some extent by calling upon Mr. Tapscott and telling young Arthur precisely what he thought of him. This relief, however, was short-lived, and it was in a mood of worried melancholy that at the day's end he left the office, repaired to his lodging and set about his sartorial preparations for the evening.

Eight o'clock found him tigerishly pacing the station platform, watch in hand. Eight-twenty-five arrived, but the Rilborough train did not. At eight-thirty a porter informed him that she was due at eight-thirty-four; at eight-forty the station-master assured him that she would arrive at eight-forty-eight; and at eight-fifty-one the train rolled nonchalantly in. There alighted in all seven passengers; but among them Mr. Frederick Mason was conspicuously not.

At first Tommy simply could not believe it; not until he had passionately questioned every available official did he fully realise that Mason definitely had not arrived, and that there was no other train from Rilborough that night. And with this realisation came a feeling almost of panic, so that his knees sagged and he sat down heavily upon a baggage-truck. What was he to do now? Lacking the necklace, how could he face Nancy? How confess his criminal negligence? How make amends? He shivered, seeing with his mind's eye the face of Miss Faythorne—astonished, angry, disappointed. . . .

Well, there was nothing to be gained by

postponing the evil hour. Sooner or later she must learn the facts, and it were better to tell her now and get it over. For this calamity he had no one to blame save himself, and he must take his medicine like a man. With which heroic conclusion he sighed mournfully, rose from the truck and went sadly out into the night.

The Faythorne mansion, when a little later he came within sight of its wide-open portal, was ablaze with light, and melodious noises from within testified that the festivities had begun. With the faltering gait of a condemned murderer on his way to the gibbet, young Mr. Ross crawled up the steps and entered the spacious hall. Surrendering his hat and coat, he looked about for a secluded corner in which to gather strength and plan out his confession; and it was at that moment that there came to him a voice, saying:

"Good evening, Mr. Ross. You look

rather depressed."

Tommy started nervously and turned unwillingly about.

"Oh—good evening, Miss Faythorne. Er—many happy returns of the day, and—and all that sort of thing."

"Thank you," said Nancy. "By the way, may I have my necklace, while I think

of it?"

Tommy's mouth opened and closed several times, like that of a stranded carp. He shuddered slightly, fixed her with a glassy eye and said hoarsely:

"Has Mason come yet?"

"Mr. Mason?" said Nancy, surprised.
"Oh, he's not coming."

There was an awful little silence.

"N-not coming?" said Tommy weakly.

"No. He went to Rilborough this afternoon and missed the last train back.

Daddy's just had a wire from him....

But what has Mr. Mason to do with my necklace?"

Tommy gaped at her, while the universe rocked about him and the ground heaved beneath his feet. His last faint hope had vanished, and he was utterly undone; nothing remained but to admit his fault and accept his punishment. He looked at Nancy, and his heart sank like a stone. What would she think of a man who not only wore hired dress-clothes but could not be trusted to look after her property for more than ten minutes at a time? Overcome by the poignancy of his predicament, he groaned aloud; he would have wrung his hands had he known how to do so.

"What's the matter, Mr. Ross?" asked Nancy, alarmed. "Do you feel ill, or——"

"Please," said Tommy manfully, avoiding her eye, "can I speak to you privately somewhere? I've something to—to tell you."

"Of course," said Nancy, puzzled but polite. "Come into the dining-room."

And in the dining-room, to the incongruous accompaniment of distant dance-music, the humiliating tale was told. Tommy, speaking in the dull voice of one in whom all hope is dead, omitted no smallest detail from his mortifying confession. He told of the hiring of the dress-suit, admitted that the presence of the necklace in his pocket had entirely escaped his memory, revealed the part played subsequently, in all innocence, by Mr. Mason. All this he laid bare, sparing himself nothing, and when the last word was said he fell abruptly silent, turned his back upon his audience and awaited sentence. And after a little pause:

"This," said Nancy in a non-committal voice, "is rather awkward. So Mr. Mason has taken my necklace to Rilborough, and

doesn't know it?"

"Yes," said Tommy, not looking at her.

"And it's an even chance that he won't find it, because a tail-pocket's an out-of-the-way sort of place. But he'll be back with it tomorrow, and I can—"

"But that," said Nancy abstractedly, "will be too late." And for a long moment she sat without speaking, staring thoughtfully at the carpet. Then she looked up at him, and went on looking until his embarrassment was pitiful to see. Suddenly she nodded, as if coming to a decision. "I think," she said slowly, "I'd better tell you all about it. Come and sit down, will you?" Another pause, and then: "I don't suppose you know it, Mr. Ross, but Daddy was rather badly hit by the Barminster Bank smash a little while ago."

Mr. Ross, taken all aback by this wholly unexpected turn of events, was understood to mumble that he had heard rumours to that effect.

"I don't know much about it myself," continued Nancy, "but it meant that Daddy had to find a lot of money quickly, and he didn't know how. Well, we talked it over, and after a lot of argument I persuaded him to let me sell my necklace. It was left to me by an aunt of mine, and I've never been really fond of it, because I don't like pearls. It's worth two thousand pounds, and it seemed wicked not to use it to help Daddy.

He wouldn't hear of it at first, but in the end he agreed to do it, if it could be done privately. And in a little while we got in

so Daddy invited him here. And he's coming," concluded Nancy, "to-night."
"Oh, Lord!" said Tommy.



touch, through a friend, with an American called Hattner, who's wanting a pearl necklace for his wife. We've never seen Mr. Hattner, but he's leaving England on Friday,

"Exactly," agreed Nancy.
Silence, while Tommy pondered this
disconcerting revelation.

disconcerting revelation.
"Look here," he said at last, "the best

thing I can do is to tell your father all about it. Then perhaps——"

"I'd rather you didn't do that," said Nancy, "because Daddy might be cross with

you—and it isn't your fault."

Tommy looked at her gratefully. Was there ever, he asked himself, a girl like this? Not a word of censure, nor even of reproach; she seemed concerned only to shield him from the just consequences of his own idiocy.

"It is my fault," he insisted stoutly, "and I deserve everything that's coming

to me."

"But I don't want Daddy to be cross with you," said Nancy, adding rather hurriedly: "It's so bad for his blood-pressure. No; let me think. Perhaps we can find some other way."

Destiny, however, declined to allow her time for thought. For it was at this highly inopportune moment that the door opened and two persons entered the room. Mr. Hilary Faythorne, to wit, and another.

"Ah, there you are, Nancy," said her parent amiably. "I've been looking for you everywhere. . . . Is that you, Ross? Ah, yes. . . . Nancy, my dear, Mr. Hattner has just arrived. Mr. Hattner, my daughter."

Tommy, surveying the new-comer with uneasy interest, saw a tall, slim, distinguished-looking gentleman in evening-clothes, with curly grey hair, a neat grey beard and moustache, and large horn-rimmed spectacles.

"I'm glad to meet you, Miss Faythorne," said Mr. Hattner, in a soft but unmistakably

American voice.

"Well, Nancy," said Mr. Faythorne, coughing, "shall we—— Ah, Ross. You'll excuse us, I hope. A little personal matter——"

"Wait a minute, Daddy," interposed his daughter calmly. "I've changed my mind. I don't want to sell my necklace—to-day."

Mr. Faythorne, visibly startled, frowned swiftly and indicated Tommy by a sidelong movement of his head.

"Really, my dear, I don't think we

need----

"Mr. Ross," said his daughter equably, "is a friend of mine, Daddy. . . . Mr. Hattner, I'm so sorry—but somehow I don't want to part with my necklace to-day. You see, it's my birthday. Won't to-morrow do?"

Mr. Hattner raised his eyebrows and

fingered his neat beard.

"Why, that's a little unexpected, Miss Faythorne—and a little disappointing. I'm travelling North to-morrow, and I sail the next day. I've come from London specially to fix this little deal-"

"Of course, of course!" put in Mr. Faythorne soothingly. In his agitation forgetting the undesired presence of young Mr. Ross, he bent a reproving glance upon his daughter. "Come, Nancy, this is hardly—ah—courteous. Mr. Hattner has come here to oblige us, and we must consider his—ah—convenience."

"Not to-day, please," said Nancy. "Won't to-morrow do, Mr. Hattner?"

Regretfully but firmly Mr. Hattner shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Miss Faythorne, but if I can't put this through to-night, we'll have to call it off. At that, I'm giving more time to it than I should. I certainly hate to disoblige a lady," said Mr. Hattner apologetically, "but——"

"Quite so—quite so!" said Mr. Faythorne pacifically. "Nancy, I must ask you to be reasonable. Really, my dear, I cannot understand your attitude. I must ask you——"

But at this juncture Tommy, temporarily paralysed by surprise at Nancy's tactics,

came to life again.

"Look here, Mr. Faythorne," he said, composedly enough, but with severe inward tremors, "this is all my fault. Miss Faythorne is trying to keep me out of it, but——"

He got no further, for Nancy motioned him to silence with a gesture so imperious that there was no defying it. Waving him aside, she moved towards the door.

"Can I speak to you alone, Daddy—outside? Mr. Hattner will forgive us, I know. . . . Oh, thank you, Mr. Hattner." For as she advanced she had let fall her hand-kerchief; Mr. Hattner stooped gracefully, retrieved it, and offered it to her with a little bow.

"But—one moment, my dear!" protested Mr. Faythorne foggily. "What has Ross to do with this? Really, this is all very confusing! Ross—you were about to say something?"

Tommy nodded and came slowly forward,

gazing steadfastly at Nancy.

"Yes," he said, very deliberately, "I've got something to say. . . . Do you know your coat is torn at the back, Mason?"

And on the last word he whirled about with the speed of light, in time to remark the involuntary movement of Mr. Hattner's hand.

"Ah!" said Tommy. His arm shot

forth, and Mr. Hattner cried out in a loud voice. One second later Nancy and her father cried out in their turn, but very differently. For the appearance of Mr. Hattner had miraculously changed before their very eyes; his hair was now dark as night and smooth as patent leather, while something grey and curly dangled limp from Tommy's hand.

"Mason!" said Mr. Faythorne, in a

stunned whisper.

The soi-disant Mr. Hattner took a quick step forward, met Tommy's eye, hesitated and fell back. He shrugged his shoulders, grinned faintly and spread out his hands in resignation.

"Smart of you, young Ross," he said.

"How did you know?"

"Your coat," answered Tommy. "When you bent down, I saw it give at the shoulder. That made me think of the coat I was wearing last night, because it did the same thing then. That made me think of you, because I knew you'd taken that coat to-day. And once I'd begun to think of you, I noticed a lot of things—the place where your wig joined your hair, and the shape of your nose, and so on. Then I knew."

"Good for you, Sherlock," said Mason,

and he laughed.

Mr. Faythorne here gave tongue, quite

unintelligibly.

"Who—what—chk—what—chk——?"
He cleared his throat violently and tried again. "What—what is the meaning of this, Mason?"

Mr. Mason grinned, leisurely removed his

beard and tossed it upon the table.

"I wanted that necklace," he explained "I've lost a pot of money lately -betting, you know-and something had to be done. I knew about your arrangement with Hattner-I wrote one of your letters to him, if you remember, and I've watched your waste-paper basket pretty carefully, and I put two and two together. Yesterday while you were out a telegram came for you, saying he couldn't get away to-day and asking you to meet him in town. to-morrow. That looked too good a chance to miss, so I took it. I knew you'd never seen him, and I thought I could bluff you both, because I'd be the last person you'd be thinking of. So I got a friend at Rilborough to wire you to-night in my name, and came over by car. I've got a lovely cheque for you in my pocket, too . . . It's rather hard," said Mr. Mason, sighing. "But for young Ross's eagle eye, I'd have

been back at work to-morrow, and all would have been well. As it is——"

"As it is," cut in Tommy, "you've been chasing your own tail." He moved quickly sideways, flicked up the tail of the other's coat, deftly thrust a hand into the pocket and jerked out a small bundle, wrapped in a fair white handkerchief. Removing the covering, he let the necklace swing for a moment from his finger; then he handed it to Nancy.

Mr. Mason's nonchalant ease of manner vanished with great suddenness. His jaw dropped and his eyes widened in blank bewilderment; he looked dazedly from the necklace to Tommy, thence at Nancy and finally at the necklace again. He blinked and passed a hand across his starting eyes; he swallowed convulsively and achieved speech.

"Well-I'm-hanged!" he said.

"What—chk—who—chk——?" said Mr. Faythorne.

Some time later Miss Nancy Faythorne and Mr. Thomas Ross sat side by side upon a window-seat. All about them rioted the birthday-party, blissfully unaware of the stirring events that had so recently occurred beneath that very roof.

"So," said Tommy, "your father let him

go ? "

Nancy nodded.

"He was afraid of the publicity, you see. If he prosecuted Mr. Mason, everybody would know all about Mr. Hattner and the necklace, and that would be horrible. As it is, there's no real harm done, and Daddy will see the real Mr. Hattner to-morrow. . . . But wasn't it lucky that the tailor hadn't time to mend that coat properly to-day?"

"Very," said Tommy. He paused, coughed, ran a finger round his collar, glanced furtively at his companion, coughed

again and said, very rapidly:

"Look here, I haven't thanked you for being such a—such a brick. You know—when I told you about the necklace going astray, and all that. I—I expected you to tear my eyes out."

"I'm sorry," said Nancy, "if you were

disappointed."

"And that yarn of yours about not wanting to sell the necklace to-day," pursued Tommy, warming to it—" was that simply on my account—to keep me out of trouble?"

"Now why," asked Nancy-but she did

not look at him as she spoke, "do you want to know that?"

"Because—" said Tommy. He stopped, breathed deeply, and went on: "because, if it was, it means that you—that

I—that we—it means that one day—Oh, hang!" said Tommy desperately. "It does mean that, doesn't it—Nancy?"
Nancy looked at him and smiled.
"More or less—Tommy," she said.

THEY.

WHEN Esther goes choosing (to flirt with the pert Small legs that she twinkles) a trim little skirt To fit, without wrinkles, however she bounces; She finds it confusing, And hardly amusing, To learn, "THEY wear flounces. There's nothing severe, THEY're all wearing flounces in Paris, this year!"

When Esther goes choosing the tweeds that she needs
To wear on her scrambles, however she pleads
For proof against brambles and "heathers" for shooting—
THEY seek to upholster,
To pad her and bolster
In verdegris suiting of batik design—
"THEY all wear this suiting: it's quite a new line!"

When Esther goes choosing new shoes, she daren't choose Nice, low-buckled sandals, for fear they'd amuse The hammer-toed vandals, forever advancing, Who tread with such passion
The footsteps of Fashion—
Since THEY wear for dancing, so salesmen reveal—
"THEY all wear, for dancing, five inches of heel!"

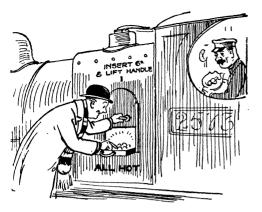
Where are all these leaders? I wist they exist
In catalogues only. We could not have missed
Their forms on the Lido, the Plages, the heather,
Their forms at the Races,
Casinos, and places
Where folks meet together. THEY're none of THEM here,
And yet we are told, "THEY wear 'salmon' this year!"

Who are THEY—these harpies who dare to declare, In manner despotic, what Esther shall wear? It makes her neurotic. Can nobody tell us? THEY're silly old fogies, Just shop-walking bogies, And probably jealous, so "register" spite Because, yes, they're jealous: She always looks right!

B. E. T



SEX WARFARE.
The Apache dance partner who retaliated.



The locomotive chesinut or boiled potatoes machine. (For winter waits at country stations.)



The pull-down suction ventilator. (For those who wish to smoke in non-smoking compartments.)



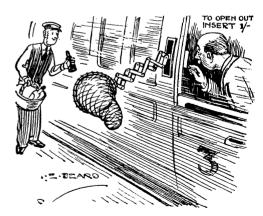
The vacuum confetti remover. (For honeymoon couples.)



The carriage foot rest. (Can be used in the most crowded compartment.)



The rush ticket office. (For people in a hurry.)



The refreshment trapper.
(For through trains without dining cars.)

MORE REVENUE FOR THE RAILWAYS.

Beyond the hiring out of pillows and rugs, British railway companies have done little to develop profitable side-lines. A WINDSOR artist suggests a few additional sources of income.

MR. BUFFUM GIVES A PARTY

By HUGH de SELINCOURT

CHARLES CROMBIE ILLUSTRATED BY

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ER birthday's on the ninth of May." Mr. Buffum was watching Monnie clean the ancient car. He heard the eager statement, but for the hundredth time he was meditating upon the pleasantness of being in his own home again—in surroundings where the beauty revealed itself to the patient, watchful eye and did not, as in the South of France, blaze and dazzle and shout. So he left the boy's remark unanswered. Monnie stood upright from the wheel over which he had been bending.

"I'm telling you her birthday's on the ninth," he repeated, firmly but without

truculence.

"Ah!" said Mr. Buffum. "Yes. I believe it is."

Monnie emptied the bucket over the wheel, refilled it from the rainwater tank, pushed

back his cloth cap and asked:

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" Mr. Buffum delighted in the pronoun. He never regarded Monnie as the gardener's boy (which he was) so much as a slightly smaller and younger human being with an enormous power of enjoyment and a talent for machinery which he himself did not possess. The fact that he paid Monnie's father three pounds a week for his skill in the garden and Monnie five shillings a week for seeing to the car was an accident which Mr. Buffum trusted would never disturb their friendly relations. He was never confident that if the accident had been reversed and he had been called upon to work in Mr. Monnie's garden, he would have been able to do the job with the same foresight, pertinacity and goodwill that Monnie's father displayed.

Mr. Buffum looked at the boy, smiling. The boy, quite accustomed to the older man's

silences, went on:

"I've been thinking about it, Gov'nor, and what I think is" (he paused for emphasis and then said slowly and impressively) "we ought to give a party. A proper birthday party. With ices and cakes and Chinese lanterns and me as page-boy waiting. I tell yer it wouldn't 'alf be a bloomin' lark."

"Oh!" said Mr. Buffum, a little taken back. "You think so?"

"Yes. I do. And not only me. Mum

and Dad does too!"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Monnie. But it's quite out of the question," said Mr. Buffum with quiet deliberation.

"'Tain't!" said the boy. "'Tain't a bit." "You see," Mr. Buffum explained, "I never properly invite Miss Lucia here; or her friend. She has a standing invitation, which is a very different thing; and they just come."

He pressed his little finger far back. "That's one reason. Then a party! You've really no idea of the sort of party these young people are accustomed to nowadays. From one party to another. Or off to a night club if they are bored." His long third finger came near breaking with the weight of pressure put on it to mark the second reason. "And they are very easily bored, Monnie."

The boy was trying furiously to bring up a polish on the ancient wing. His face and every movement showed obstinate disagreement. Mr. Buffum gave a kindly smile and said in as soothing a voice as he could command:

"So, you see, for us to think of a proper party would be somewhat . . . somewhat

pretentious."

"Pre-hoo? What's 'ee, then?" Monnie snapped. Long words often came as an insult. Mr. Buffum was thinking of a commoner equivalent when the boy rapped out: "You keeps yerself to yerself far too much. We all thinks that."

The charge, especially after his visit to the South of France, seemed hopelessly unjust to Mr. Buffum, even though he was inclined to agree with any stricture upon his own character. He turned sadly away, not because he thought the boy's remark rude and unsuitable, but because he knew that at his age he was what he was without chance of change, and any discussion of the unalterable could only lead to unpleasantness. wandered away to look at his tall tulips. would be nicer, of course, for everyone concerned if he were a genial easy fellow, sociable and bright and go-ahead. It was unfortunate to be as he was. He tried to imagine Monnie in his place. Then how delightful such a little party as he suggested might be! But he was not Monnie: he was his own dull self, and must remain so. He owned, too, that he was, on the whole, content to remain so, though he disliked disappointing Monnie. He wandered back to the industrious boy. He was blandly confident, in spite of all experience, that if Monnie realised the complete impossibility of his suggestion, the disappointment would be lessened: on the assumption that no one really desires the moon, when it is recognised as a moon.

"You see, Monnie," he said, "if it were your party, I'm sure it would be a capital plan; but I am a quite hopeless duffer at that sort of thing. We none of us can help

how we're made, you know."

For answer, the inconsequent creature pulled out from his trouser pocket a large piece of torn newspaper which, on being smoothed out, proved to be an advertisement of an ice-cream freezer.

"Mrs. Eliza says they're rare good value."

Mr. Buffum smelled conspiracy.

"Have you mentioned the party to her?" he inquired.

"'Course. It's her idea me waitin'."

"Ah!" said Mr. Buffum.

"We could buy one in Worthing this afternoon. And Mum says, if we was in Worthing, would you mind me buying some more flannel for Dad's shirts, as she wants more?"

"We could anyhow do that," said Mr. Buffum, glad to be able to agree about

something.

He left Monnie and spent a pleasant morning with the boy's father, pricking out nemesia into larger boxes.

At lunch Eliza said to him: "Isn't it

lucky, sir, Miss Lucia's birthday should fall on a Saturday this year?"

Conspiracy simply reeked. Mr. Buffum said weakly, "Most fortunate!" hoping the matter would end. It did not end.

"Because if you were thinking of giving a little party to celebrate the occasion . . . She stopped—uncomfortably for Mr. Buffum, who could never somehow be as explicit with Eliza as he could be with Monnie. Eliza was so capable and firm and kind that he could never escape very far from the sensation of being looked after as a nurse looks after a small boy. Indeed, the idea was not so very far-fetched, for when he came to think of it, as he quite often did, where would he be without kind Eliza to cook for him and clean for him and make his bed and sew on his buttons and all the rest? Moreover, he had heard her announce, laughing, to Mr. Nicholson the baker: "Men are helpless creatures!" None knew this better than Mr. Buffum, for whom it served as food for much meditation.

Eliza set two pancakes before him, a slice

of lemon, soft white sugar.

"No one can make pancakes like you," said Mr. Buffum hopefully, but Eliza knew this so well that she hardly noticed the remark.

"I should let her know as soon as possible."

"But I've never dreamed of anything of the sort!" cried Mr. Buffum, alarmed at this swoop of the enemy upon him.

"Possibly not, sir," replied Eliza, unperturbed. "But if you should, I should be glad of plenty of time for my arrangements."

Mr. Buffum made a gallant stand.

"I suppose, Eliza, you've not already issued invitations?"

"No, sir," she explained, the sharp sarcastic thrust taking no more effect upon her than a sword upon a shadow. "It's only come up in talk, like. I always did think you spoil young Monnie: not but what he's a likeable lad. He said: 'We ought to give you a birthday party, Miss.' And Miss Lucia said: 'Oh, do! What fun!' And since then we have talked, if you understand, of what we might do, if you did think of a little party. But, of course, we quite understand it all depends upon you, sir."

Mr. Buffum discharged his last sarcastic

javelin.

"Thank you very much for mentioning it."
"Not at all, sir," said Eliza calmly, and quietly left the room, leaving Mr. Buffum aghast at her total disregard of his sarcastic brilliance, which, had he been less pleased

at the humour of the position, might have proved more effective.

"They'll be giving this horrible party!" He smiled to himself in dismay.

The door from the House Place was softly

seized and dragged forward by a stern

"How often have I told you the Master's on no account to be disturbed at his meals!"



"'We ought to give a party,' said Monnie, 'a proper birthday party. With ices and cakes, and Chinese lanterns and me as page-boy waiting."

opened a little way: a grinning face

appeared. A husky, low voice whispered:
"I say, Gov'nor, if we are going to have her oil changed . . ." The adjacent kitchen door was smartly pulled open, the culprit

As Monnie was taken into the kitchen, he finished his sentence:

"We oughtn't to waste any time."

Mr. Buffum heard what he took to be a lecture proceeding from the kitchen; but the last and only words he actually made out were in Monnie's unmuffled voice: "You are a one!" So he gathered the lecture was not severe enough to call for interrup-

"That boy can do what he likes with Eliza," he thought with a superior smile. "Me spoil him. She's given him a gingerbread." And dispensing with his usual cigarette, he went out of the dining-room.

They drove to Worthing to get the flannel

for Monnie's mother.

Mr. Buffum enjoyed driving so much that he welcomed an errand as mitigating the selfish wickedness of his enjoyment. He knew he was glad that Monnie was too young to drive. Monnie did all the dirty arduous work: he liked changing a wheel; he liked using the grease-gun; he liked pouring in oil; he liked cleaning the car. All this Mr. Buffum detested as much as he delighted in driving. He faced the position so squarely and felt the unfairness so strongly that Monnie himself had no room as it were to feel it at all, and often chortled to Mr. Buffum on their luck in having a car of their own to play about with, and reminded him of his statement that he would never be able to drive a car.

Monnie's "This is it, Gov'nor: on the right," caused Mr. Buffum to draw up carefully by the kerb. Monnie got quickly out.

"Aren't you comin' in?" he asked

eagerly.
"No! No! You can get it. I'll wait here," said Mr. Buffum, and, lighting a cigarette, relapsed into pleasant meditation, watching the people, sitting in his own car . . . from which he was startled by Monnie's voice: "This is our size, Gov'nor: thought you ought to see to make sure!" and surprised at the sight of a shop-assistant on the pavement, carrying what looked to be two neat round covered pails of various sizes.

"What the deuce!" began Mr. Buffum, searching Monnie's face for a sign of something other than guileless innocence and

failing to find it.

"This is the size," explained the imperturbable shop-assistant, balancing one pail lightly on the door of the car, "which I should recommend as most suitable for your purpose."

"I say, mind our paint!" put in Monnie earnestly, gazing in rapture at the freezer. Again the humour of the position proved too much for Mr. Buffum's firmness of purpose. What could he do but buy the wretched thing? but have the wretched party? meekly bought it. Then, desperate, left the car, crossed the road, entered the post office, and sent a reply-paid telegram to Niece Lucia.

Should be so pleased if you could possibly come here for your birthday. Bring Miss Marion and a boy or two.—Uncle.

He scratched out boy and wrote man, then scratched out man and re-wrote boy. Finally scratched out every word after Marion.

The girl treated the portentous message with the appalling calm with which the clerk at a registry office notes particulars for a

man's marriage.

It was not easy to stir Mr. Buffum to action, but when once started he was a good goer, almost too good a goer. In this instance, for example, he overran himself a little, for he called personally on two friendly couples, and two boys who ran a farm near by, invited them to a small party on Saturday night at 8.30, received their acceptance gratefully, and only realised on turning into his own drive gate that he had not yet heard whether Niece Lucia would be coming or not. His distress was great; he failed to imagine what he could possibly do with all these people and no Niece Lucia. was forced to confess his impetuous folly to Eliza, who was not comforting. She said that it would be a little awkward, but no doubt he would manage quite well, and was anxious to show him how the freezer worked, in which he was too wrought up to take the faintest interest.

He was about to send a frantic second telegram when the 'phone bell rang and the operator read in a businesslike voice:

Aren't you a perfect lamb to suggest it. Rather. Both.

There were nine days to the day of the party. During the week-end Mr. Buffum allowed his mind quietly to play with every aspect of the coming event in the most elderly and sensible manner, alone. was no need for undue excitement. friends were coming to a small festivity, a pleasant and ordinary little affair which must on no account be pretentious. They would arrive about 8.30; he would greet them with a glass of Vermouth, flavoured with gin—(Gin and It, he believed Niece called it). They would dance for an hour or two, partake of some light refreshment, dance a little more, and depart. It was all quite simple and straightforward; his mind, in happy contemplation of the event still distant, dismissed fuss and bother and excitement as foolish and unnecessary. What did it matter that it happened to be the first proper party he had ever given, when a little party was, after all, such a simple business?

Moreover, he instantly knew what he was going to give Niece Lucia, and on Monday or Tuesday he would go to London and find it; the most absurd, useless and delightful gaud, the name of which he did not know; a sort of instep garter of glittering paste, with a pair of shoes without straps, for these funny foot bracelets could only be worn with strapless shoes. And he would give her them at the party itself—a delicious little surprise. Their presentation immediately became the main feature of the evening, and grew more so, when on Monday he found an exquisite pair at the third jeweller's he called at in Bond Street.

On Tuesday the mischief began-with Monnie's suggestion that they ought to have fireworks; rockets and Roman candles, catherine wheels, squibs, coloured lights and crackers. He would gladly arrange it all and let them off, say, just before supper. The wild suggestion was, of course, immediately quenched, but it opened a door to aggravating thought; that the party, though it must not on any account be pretentious, must be a success. People must enjoy themselves. An awful unknown factor was introduced. What did they enjoy? Why should they enjoy themselves? could see no reason why they should. It would be far better if they stopped quietly at home. Perhaps they shared Monnie's strange passion for fireworks. . . . It would be sure to rain. Coming out on a wet night, and going home on a wet night, while he remained comfortably in the dry. He could imagine few things more penitential—when he enjoyed sitting peacefully by the fire with a book, listening to the rain and the wind outside. . . . Fancy being tricked into this insanity by Monnie's wish to let off fireworks. He ought to have known Would the men dress? He had not mentioned the matter. It was the sort of thing that was taken for granted, one way or the other, in circles with a distinct outline; definitely high or definitely low, not feebly nondescript like his own. horrible party glared like a ferocious spotlight on the privacies of his life.

As the days passed the atmosphere of his quiet home slowly became tense and thick with mystery and preparation and plan. Mr. Buffum experienced the odd sensation

of being wound up a turn or two more tightly than was safe and many turns more tightly than was agreeable.

It was not wholly Monnie's fault, though the infection of his excitement was partly responsible. The boy relinquished the idea of fireworks, only to adhere like a postage stamp to the necessity of Chinese lanterns. What party could possibly be a success without Chinese lanterns? Mr. Buffum could find no answer, any more than he could find a reason for the boy's conviction. So he remained speechless.

"Well, then!" Monnie charged his speechlessness and won. Certainty routed doubt. Mr. Buffum drove into Worthing, sitting meekly by the side of his conqueror, and purchased one dozen Chinese lanterns of various sizes. Henceforth it became a fact beyond dispute in Mr. Buffum's mind that a party was no party without Chinese lanterns and ice-cream.

On Friday morning, after breakfast, he found Eliza and Monnie's father in solemn conference in the drawing-room.

"We were discussing how we could make more room for the dance," Eliza informed him.

"Well, you know," Mr. Buffum hastily demurred, "it's not really a dance. It's only the merest little party."

Monnie's father eyed him severely from under thick eyebrows, and wasted no word upon him. Monnie's mother, who came in every morning to work in the house, joined them. A committee, a quorum quite, and all three stared at the room.

"At best, it's none too large," Monnie's father announced.

The room shrank to pitiful proportions in Mr. Buffum's eye. And there were countless details to be thought of: far too many. It had never occurred to him that the entire room should be re-arranged.

"We'll give the floor a good polish this morning, and do it with French chalk."

Monnie's mother spoke to Eliza. "I'd never thought of that!" Mr

"I'd never thought of that!" Mr Buffum exclaimed, and owned to himself that his mind had been mostly concentrated upon the presentation of the instep bracelets to Niece Lucia, which, properly speaking, had very little to do with the party, or at any rate the necessary arrangements for the party.

Mr. Monnie had often spoken to the Gov'nor about going into the village in dirty shoes; he had a high standard for the honour of the house with regard to the

polish on shoes and other matters. He scoffed at the Gov'nor's suggestion that Monnie might take on boot-cleaning, treating it as the frailest excuse for escape from supervision. "A nice mess the two of you would make of it!" was his gruff comment, which made Mr. Buffum sense competition for a privilege rather than relief from a menial job.

But whenever the honour of the house was concerned, Mr. Buffum felt remiss, even with Monnie, who had it badly; it must be left in other hands. So now at this committee-like gathering he felt uneasy and out of place and quietly slipped away—to encounter Monnie, peering in at the front door, hammer in hand, eager to have a go at the Chinese lanterns. They were to be hung in the House Place, the low-beamed living-room of the cottage on to which Mr. Buffum had built; so at least Monnie had decided. The people would sit in there and eat ice-cream.

"But suppose they won't?" Mr. Buffum faltered.

"Won't! Won't what?" asked Monnie.

"Won't sit here."

"You'll have to make 'em."

"This old chimney smokes," Mr. Buffum expostulated.

"We're going to put the big stove there,"

Monnie declared, pointing.

Mr. Buffum wandered out into the garden. The whole thing was getting far out of his modest range. Monnie had better join the committee meeting in the drawing-room. The house apparently was to be transformed. Out through the window came Monnie's loud asseveration: "The Gov'nor said I could put up the Chinese lanterns."

Mr. Buffum hastened his step; it might be a pardonable inference, but he remembered saying nothing of the kind. Everything pointed to a pleasant stroll away from the harassing vicinity of the house.

But he had not gone far when he quickly returned, all of a bustle, all of a tremble. He had neglected to consider the question of drink at supper; he had not sufficient cigarettes . . . these silly Chinese lanterns had put everything out of his head. Friday—it was too late to order wine properly from London.

"Come along, Monnie," he called in a peremptory voice. "Get the car out. We must go into the village at once."

He did not hear Mr. Monnie chuckle to the dames of the committee: "The old chap's in some bloomin' stew! Not him!" He only heard the happy laughter of the committee, which helped to soothe his troubled mind with the thought: "Well, at any rate they seem to be liking it!"

Mr. Buffum had no conception how the white wine from Algeria reached the village emporium, but he knew that with siphons of soda it was the drink he wanted, pleasant and refreshing; bottled beer would be rather low; champagne would be pretentious. On this, no argument would have taken effect; he felt about it in the same way as Monnie felt about Chinese lanterns, though if he had trusted himself, like Monnie, he would really have preferred to make a Cup.

But he did not trust himself like Monnie. and as the day of the party drew nearer he trusted himself less and less. It was one thing to telephone on the spur of the last moment to the nice friendly Ropers or the nice friendly Barlows—or even the boys at the farm: "My niece is here, won't you round; we might dance a little perhaps." It was a totally different thing to invite them all together, nine days in advance, to a proper party, the success of which depended wholly, of course, upon the host, namely himself. It was as though his house was being strenuously transformed into a stage (with footlights), on which he was doomed to play the chief part. than that. He could at any rate become word perfect in a part; in this show the unforeseen was bound to happen. improvisation from start to finish. He did not even know who would be the first to arrive.

When Mr. Buffum heard that Niece Lucia and Miss Marion would not be coming until 6.30, he very nearly cancelled the whole thing. Then, too, he was incautious enough to show Monnie his present for Niece on Saturday morning and tell him of the possible little ceremony of presentation. Monnie leapt at the idea; the ceremony grew ever more elaborate in his fertile mind, until eventually Miss Lucia sat enthroned, the page brought in the jewels to the sound of trumpets (Dad on the cornet) on a scarlet cushion, the Gov'nor, kneeling, buckled them on her queenly feet. . . . To hear his own absurd little private dream shouted thus on the house-tops by this unblushing boy was most painful to Mr. Buffum; it made him feel both silly and incompetent; silly to have thought of it at all; incompetent to feel a sinking in the stomach at the mere thought of doing it. And yet to

know that from his point of view the whole party would be a failure if he didn't. Oh! Anyhow, the party would be a failure.

He was so sure of it that by the time the girls arrived (late, of course) he met them with quiet resignation—with the set demeanour with which guests are welcomed to a funeral, and they were too hurried and excited to notice it.

On the gramophone he placed mournfully a half-sheet of note-paper on which he had written the order of service, the list of dance records, that is. He would see the thing through somehow. After all, what did it matter if he made a fool of himself? It wouldn't be the first time; it wouldn't be the last. Of course, he shouldn't have dreamed of giving a party. He hadn't wanted to, he'd been pushed into it by others. Well, it would not last for ever; in a few hours the worst would be over.

"Come what, come may,

Time and the hour run through the roughest day."

The dear girls' delighted chatter at the light meal they were late for made him feel worse, not better. Such a heavenly plan! Was it! So like him to have thought of it! Like him, forsooth. Fancy, Chinese lanterns in the House Place! Fancy, indeed! And ice-cream, too, and all that floor-space made for dancing. . . . Mr. Buffum could not help his sour and gloomy feelings, though he disliked harbouring them. Nor did he like taking credit due to others, though he could not at that moment disabuse them. Least of all did he like his inability to mention that Monnie was going to act as page-boy, for he was aware of being ashamed of his small henchman, and would much prefer him to be going sensibly to bed rather than to be playing the little donkey, dressed up in buttons and white cotton gloves. His own weakness was responsible for this idiocy. He felt about Monnie now much the same as he had felt about a velveteen suit which his mother had wanted him to wear at his preparatory school. Monnie was as nice as the velveteen suit was pretty, but would the others understand?

Mr. Buffum's despair touched bottom when the first knock was heard. He had not been at the cottage during many rehearsals of announcement. He waited breathless with anxiety during interminable moments while coats and cloaks were being removed. The door opened, an unrecognisably brushed beautiful and shining Monnie stiffly appeared and announced in a voice that hardly wavered:

"Colonel and Mrs. Barlow."

Surprise keyed Mr. Buffum up like the perfect lead of a great actor, and pleasure too. Niece Lucia and Miss Marion obviously understood at once. Good time to hand round Gins and Its; another knock.

"Mr., Mrs. and Miss Roper," without a quaver in his voice this time. And the boys from the farm came last, as Mr. Buffum hoped they would. What they had said to Monnie outside was unknown, but stiff solemnity had given place to a grin so wide that had their names been less familiar they would have been difficult to catch.

The sun can burst out from behind black banks of cloud and scatter them. Perhaps preliminary toe-chilling hesitation increases the pleasure of the man when he is swimming. Perhaps the nine days' wait—nine days' cumulative excitement suppressed now rose and broke and carried Mr. Buffum along like a tidal wave. . . .

Mr. Buffum forgot himself, forgot his age, forgot his awful position as host, forgot his shyness and incompetence, first in pleasure at the apparition and performance of young Monnie, then in the sheer delight of dancing, as he led off Mrs. Barlow to the gay strains of Annabel Lee ("Who is marvellous? Who is wonderful?"), serenely aware that his little cherished plan of having Miss Marion as partner for his favourite waltz Always could not be thwarted. Always was third on his list. Miss Marion must with quite ceremonial propriety be his third partner. The room was a perfect size for five couples, the floor had rubbed up to a surprising polish. He had never realised before how well Mrs. Roper danced—as she answered in his arms to a romping tune from Sonnie. Niece put the records on with swift precision. So dear of her, never had to be asked even . . . with a girl like Lucia to help. . . . And everyone—he couldn't help noticing—was in it, without any terrible frigid wait. . . . Without any hurry, but without the waste of a single moment of the tune, he stepped up to Miss Marion for Always, and, what was for Mr. Buffum almost a novel experience, forgot to question whether a man of his age and upbringing had a right to be so drowned in happiness. And that blessed niece of his called out, "Far too short. Same partners," without even looking at him, and off they went again in dreamy silence.

Little Miss Roper was a darling child. Mr. Buffum liked her shyness in dancing with him, liked putting her at her ease, liked to feel her dancing better and better, liked her gasped "Thank you!" at the end. And when he at length danced with Niece Lucia it was good to hear whispered as they moved in such delightful proximity: "You are a marvel, old man! I've never known—a dance—start so bang off.—How do you—manage it?"

Mr. Buffum knew it all with happy complete awareness and gave himself up to enjoyment. But he said nothing, he held her closer, his smile widened. And she never even dreamed of expecting any little present. . . . So many girls would play up to old Uncle for what they could get, but Niece Lucia . . .



"The door opened, an unrecognisably brushed beautiful and shining Monnie stiffly appeared and announced in a voice that hardly wavered: 'Colonel and Mrs. Barlow.'"

Mr. Buffum could not explain what a complete duffer he was; there was no need to explain how others had done it all; what two such girls as Niece Lucia and Miss Marion brought with them; how Monnie's keenness glowed in the background....

why, to have shabby thoughts of anyone with Niece Lucia in his arms seemed meagre and profane.

By a happy coincidence the next record was Looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses.

And so it went on, till the troubled, anxious face of Monnie peered in at a tune's end, and a hoarsely whispered stern "Gov'nor" called him out, to see the effect of the Chinese lanterns, lighted. The beamed House Place, through which the party must pass to the dining-room, looked pretty and

shown the Governor with eager solemnity. "There'll be plenty of ice-cream; it's turned out beautiful," Eliza announced.

"You've got to make 'em eat it in the House Place," hissed Monnie.

"Two more dances, then supper," Eliza (chief prompter) continued.



strange as a room in a play, and in it the full committee, most eager and conspiratorial, like stage managers and hands before the curtain rises on the scene, were assembled. Monnie's father had drawn the corks from the bottles which Monnie's mother had swathed in white napkins. All arrangements were

"You must get back now," Monnie's father insisted.

And back Mr. Buffum went, keen as Monnie, not doubting at all where the inspiration of the party lay.

At supper Monnie was immense. He started handing sandwiches immediately,

long before the last couple had reached the dining-room. He wanted to do all the waiting. The only drawback was that he wanted the sandwiches finished before the cakes were even cut. Everything must be eaten to the last crumb. He was teased, he was joked at, but he was too busy and intent to heed jokes or teasing. Mr. Buffum heard him whisper to Niece, "I say, Miss Lucia, there's ice-cream afterwards. You've got to make 'em eat it in the House Place." Mr. Buffum had one for himself a moment afterwards, as he was cutting a chocolate cake, for Monnie whispered violently in his ear, "That garter thing. Aren't you going to give it, then?"

That now seemed quite impossible to Mr. Buffum, but it spurred him to stop the hubbub of glad chatter and propose Niece Lucia's health, which was drunk with

acclamation.

But people were ceasing to eat. Cigarettes were being lighted. Monnie grew anxious. The Governor refused to notice his nods and hints. The ice-cream, he knew, was already served in little glass saucers waiting on the kitchen table. Still the Governor smiled and talked. Monnie's patience gave out; he made a loud announcement: "There's ice-cream—now—please to be eaten in the House Place."

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Buffum. "That's

most important."

The guests wandered into the House Place; slowly, first one, then another, sat down. At length they were all grouped among the Chinese lanterns. And Mr. Buffum found that people in their queer light took on a slight but pleasant difference, as he talked to them, just as the beamed room in which they hung was the same yet not the same.

Monnie informed his special friends—little Miss Roper, the boys from the farm, and of course Miss Lucia and Miss Marion—that there were second goes of ice-cream.

"But we must dance," cried Mr. Buffum,

asserting himself.

"We'll come and sit out," Lucia put an arm round Monnie to say—and her Uncle noticed the gesture and said, "There now," to himself, as though he liked reasons for his love of Niece.

Oddly enough, his total inability to cope with the formal presentation did not depress Mr. Buffum, as might have been expected; on the contrary, it seemed to add to the zest of his enjoyment for what was within his capacity. He had the huge satisfaction of

independence, for now he was a boy, without the dreadful encumbrance of someone standing over him with an awful "you must" upon his lips. In consequence, he felt as the evening proceeded, in his own modest way, quite reckless and abandoned, and took (without any snatching) every opportunity of dancing with Miss Marion, even on one or two occasions making the opportunity.

The evening was an undoubted success. "Oh, just one more! Just one more!" It was nearly two when the last guest went.

The Chinese lanterns dangled lightless in the House Place, where Eliza had left the usual small lamp burning before retiring. Mr. Buffum smoked and talked happily for ten minutes or so in the bare drawing-room with Niece Lucia and Miss Marion. At length he wished them good night and saw them depart upstairs, smiling over what they assured him was one of the jolliest evenings they had ever spent.

Mr. Buffum went the round of the house, bolting windows, locking doors, putting out lights. In a dark corner of the House Place he came upon Monnie, asleep in a large chair.

Mr. Buffum gently woke him, and lighted the candle in his storm lantern, wondering how the boy had come to be overlooked. He saw the sleepy child back to the cottage.

"Your party was a great success, Monnie.

No one was bored."

"Lots more ice-cream not ate," the boy grumbled.

Mr. Buffum steered him, a hand on his shoulder, along dark garden paths, blacker outside the circle of light thrown by the lantern. Every now and then Monnie sleepily stumbled.

"Did you give them garter things?" he mumbled. Mr. Buffum hoped he was talk-

ing in his sleep and said nothing.
"Did you give them garter things?" he

repeated.

There was a painful pause. They were

nearing the cottage.
"What will your Mum and Dad say?

You being so late?"

The back door was unlocked. Mr. Buffum opened it, holding up the lantern for the boy to see his way through the kitchen. By the far door he turned and asked once more with drowsy insistence: "Did you give them garter things?"

Mr. Buffum turned, and closing the cottage door carefully, walked back to the house

through the dark garden, smiling.



SIGNOR ARNALDO MUSSOLINI.

ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY

WHY WE HAVE COLONIES By ARNALDO MUSSOLINI

(Brother of the Italian Dictator)

O vast and complex a problem as that of the foreign and colonial policy of the Fascismo cannot be thoroughly dealt with in a magazine article. It could supply matter for an entire volume. Also the question is very delicate. The Duce personally directs this responsible department of Italian politics, and it is therefore only possible to treat the subject broadly rather than in detail.

This being stated, it is evident to the impartial observer that the Fascista foreign

policy is not in any way aggressive. It is designed to defend our country against the ignorance and malevolence of others. It is a method of conducting foreign affairs with dignity and firmness. As a result of this new method those who treated Italy as a nation which might always be neglected now regard her as practising unwarranted aggressiveness.

In the post-war period the policy of alliances, a survival of the past, was not viewed with great favour. Nevertheless,

the unity of the Allies was more or less maintained. This policy of loyalty we consider is commendable, provided that, without forgetting the past, it pays attention to the requirements of the future.

We must frankly admit, however, that the state of mind of Italians is not now one of great gratitude towards the Allies of the War. There is not a family in the country without a war widow or an orphan. We have made enormous sacrifices to gain, with the Allies, a final victory of arms.

Despite this victory, we came away from the Peace Conference with a sense of deep dissatisfaction—in fact, with great bitterness. Even the natural geographic and linguistic factors were disputed, especially in Dalmatia. To obtain Fiume as an outand-out Italian city we were compelled to fight to an incredible extent. In the case of the colonies, merely some rectification of the boundaries was made. Our policy with regard to raw materials was completely ignored.

There are elements in Italian life which must be examined by ourselves and by the world. The first is the demographic problem, the second that of the large number of Italians who live outside our own frontiers. The third—and last—is the new spirit which animates all classes of the Italian people.

We must have an ordered, if distant, vision of the future of our country, and we must act with a full sense of our re-

sponsibility.

There are interests which must be safeguarded even at the cost of great effort. The necessity for expansion becomes every day increasingly urgent. To live we must adopt a reasonable policy, but we must not weaken our efforts or lose sight of our aims. The corporative idea is simply a reflection of our fundamental wants.

Finally, the product of our labour and ingenuity and the qualities of our race must find an outlet in suitable markets. It is not conceivable that the Italian people can

merely supply emigrants for countries which wish to increase their population at the expense of our own nationals.

The foreign and colonial policy of Italy, however, has no objects in view which can cause anxiety. The speech which the Duce delivered in the Senate elucidated that policy.

The demographic policy of the Government, which is of outstanding importance, will, together with the rural policy, give definite results.

But even when our soil, exactly half of which consists of mountains of small value from the agricultural standpoint, has brought its production to a maximum, there will still remain the necessity of finding work for our excess population. Belgium is the only country in Europe where density of the population is greater, and she has solved the problem with the aid of colonial raw materials and those of her subsoil, so that her industry can offer work to all her people.

In Italy, on the contrary, in view of the scarcity of raw materials, the whole of our population could only be employed by tilling the soil. I may add that agricultural work is more congenial than industrial activities to the character and capacities of the Italians.

But once the rural question is solved in the homeland, we must still find new land to reclaim and cultivate elsewhere.

As there remains a great area for development in the Mediterranean basin, we cannot understand why our emigrants should go to populate far-away America. According to an approximate estimate, three hundred thousand individuals will go to populate our colonies. There is no army of labourers more pacific and more meritorious than ours.

In short, it is necessary to find room to develop our character—the character of an ancient people—in the prevailing civilisation, the stimulus arising from a sense of duty originating in necessity and founded on justice.



CHARM AGAINST LOW SPIRITS

WHO sees the sun on his left at night
Hot-red on the world's low rim,
While the moon swings silver upon his right,
The Fairies are good to him.

So out, out, out with your heart's desire!
They grant him his wishes soon
Who treads a hill between ice and fire,
The sun and the rising moon.

When the dreaming downs are a cloudy line, And the clouds down-ridges are, Count you the stars as their candles shine, And fix you the seventh star:

> Then look through the twigs of a hawthorn tree At your winking star and say— "Grant, Good Folk, my desire to me Ere these twigs bend white with may!

"Grant, Good Folk, that my love and I, In the golden days of June, May watch together before we die The sun and the rising moon!"

If out of the branches overhead
A carol of song is heard,
'Tis surely a sign this year you'll wed!—
For that is the Fairy Bird.

Then see if the Pixie Dog has crossed The west, with his coat of black: For that is a sign the love you've lost The Fairies will send you back.

> Last, bow three times to the jovial sun As he dips beneath the plain; And twice to the moon who grins with fun, When the moon and you remain.

There's never a charm to break the charm
That's blest by the night and day,
Unless it should be your own hands harm
A tree of the flowering may.

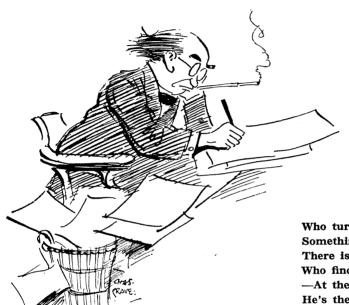
So out, out, out with your heart's desire!
They grant him his wishes soon
Who treads a hill between ice and fire,
The sun and the rising moon.

TEMPLE LANE.

PEOPLE WE SHOULD LIKE TO MEET:

A DRAMATIST WHO REFUSED TO WRITE A CROOK PLAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES GRAVE



X HAS written a play,
Though you may
think it's twaddle,
For it doesn't conform
To the usual model.
There isn't a crook
Disguised as a 'tec,
Who commits several
murders
At risk of his neck.
There isn't a dandy,
With eyeglass and card.

Who turns out to be
Something big at the Yard.
There isn't a hero
Who finds by a fluke
—At the end of the play—
He's the son of a duke.

The butler is faithful, And so is the cook, And neither turn out To be leagued with the crook. There isn't a dirty, old Scamp of a Chink, Who heard of the secret When he was in clink. There isn't a gang Of rum-runners or thugs, Who capture the hero And fill him with slugs. There isn't a heroine, Brave as Diana, Who repulses the crook With the aid of a spanner, And rescues the hero -Who's bound tip and toe-









As he gapes at the bomb, With five seconds to go. There isn't a mystery Man from the East, Who's half a collector And half a High Priest. There isn't an ancient And poisonous ring. Which kills a young girl With a death-dealing spring. There isn't a sliding Collapsible floor, Which lets people through, And you see them no more. There isn't a corpse Huddled all of a twist. With a message in code Crumpled up in its fist. There isn't a horrible Scream in the night, Which turns all your hair To a delicate white. There isn't a nurse. With sponge-bag and pails, To rush you outside When your heart nearly fails. There isn't an actor, Who sits just behind And gets shot from the stage Though it's really a blind-Says he, "None of these things Will occur in my play, And if you don't like it. Well, just stay away."

GEORGE THOMAS.

CRICKET.

RICKET is a queer business. There is nothing quite like it. It is more than a game. It is a tradition, a spirit, an ideal.

It stands for what the nation honours most; it is a pseudonym for fair-play. It is England.

It is a warfare without atrocities or regrets. It makes the conquered own brother to his conqueror.

It is stronger than treaties, more enduring than trade agreements.

It knows no social order; nationality is no bar.

Colour makes no difference, nor does language, nor address.

Every cricket field the whole world over is as much England as is Mitcham Green or a Flanders graveyard.

Yet there is something wrong with cricket; everybody says so; everybody always

has said so, everybody always will.

There is a significance about this desire to reform cricket. Other popular pastimes are not reformed; when they need it they die of starvation.

In spite of the reformers cricket stays much what it has always been.

The critics go on with their abuse, they stay away, they threaten the game with financial

dissolution and would relegate it to "its proper sphere—the village green."

They are sure that professionalism is ruining it, yet, when a small or unsuccessful County sends out a mid-winter S.O.S., they get the tang of the turf, they start abruptly as at a ghostly "How's that?" and write a cheque for more than they can well afford. Cricket will never be umpired "out."

With April the grumblers are subscribers once again. They hurry to the County Ground, not to play, they are past that; but to stand at the nets and criticise, and comment,

They regret the times that are past, but speak of a promising "colt" as of a well-loved

With the coming of the first match you can see them scurrying up the hill from the tram terminus, rheumatics forgotten in the thrill of the distant soft sweet click of bat meeting ball.

With happy sigh they settle down behind the bowler's arm. In their mind's eye is a

long vista of sunshine, of bands and bunting, and of sandwich lunches.

There will be many and intimate conversations between chance acquaintances, for Hobbs, Hendren, and Woolley have made a thousand introductions for every hundred

A fund of reminiscence, more or less truthful; no man over forty will dare acknowledge that he was absent from the Oval when Jessop saved England in a Test Match.

Everything is lovely—then it rains.

Rain, we are told, ruins cricket. Perhaps it does, but they will all be back again tomorrow, watching umpires and captains inspecting the pitch, listening to the dreary drone of the gramophone behind the "obscure" glass of the dressing-room windows.

Cricket is rather like a religion, and a good religion too. It may be a bit ritualistic, full of intricate forms and ceremonies, but it teaches all a man need know. Books could

be written along those lines.

It has united the churches on every ground throughout the land. In the best seats in every pavilion the clergy wrangle to their hearts' content, and all stay loyal to the sacred

The ceremonies of cricket always attract, its trappings are beautiful. Batting pleases all, bowling many, and fielding appeals to the well-versed few; but it is the spirit of the game that counts.

It is because spirits are immortal that cricket will never die.

The spirit of cricket supports it.

Either that or the fact that the grounds have an all-day licence.

Anyhow, spirits have something to do with it.

R. J. J. W.



CHANGING GUARD AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

From the picture by Fred Roe, R.I., in the possession of Sir Charles Wakefield, Bart.

MILITARY MUSICIANS AS ARTISTS SEE THEM

By J. PAINE

T nearly all Royal Academy exhibitions there is one painting that becomes known in a surprisingly short time as "the picture of the year." Seven years ago it was A. J. Munnings' "Drummer of His Majesty's First Life Guards," a superb study of a mounted military musician outside Buckingham Palace. The subject is of particular interest, since the dress worn by the drummer has changed but little since the middle of the eighteenth century. As a work of art the picture is perfect, since it is in every respect realistic. It is seldom that a sensation in the world of art is brought about by the creation on canvas of so humble a personage as a military

musician, but the mention of this outstanding example of the artist's powers recalls a few other paintings of warrior minstrels which in their day have gained the admiration of a critical public.

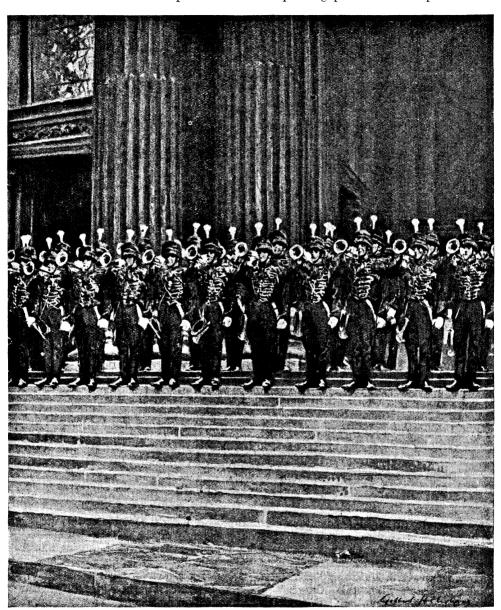
Lady Butler, the greatest military painter of our own country, was attracted, like Munnings, by the impressive spectacle of the kettle-drummer of a cavalry regiment. In a little-known picture painted in 1914 she depicted three of them, side by side, with the massed mounted bands dimly visible in the background. In another she executed one of her masterpieces, "Steady, the Drums and Fifes!" that brilliant portrayal of the yellow-coated drummers of the

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Fifty-Seventh standing under fire at Albuhera (16th May, 1811), the battle in which the regiment gained its honourable nickname of "The Die-Hards." The picture was

Middlesex Regiment (57th), then in the 2nd Brigade.

After exhibition at the Royal Academy, the painting passed into the possession of



"THE LAST POST."

Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral for the Royal Regiment of Artillery, St. George's Day, 1919.

From the print after the original picture by Gilbert Holiday, R.I.

painted at Aldershot in 1896, when the artist's husband, General Sir William Butler, commanded the 2nd Brigade. Her models were serving drummers of the 1st Battalion,

the 1st Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment, now stationed at Catterick, where it may be seen to this day in the officers' mess. It is being reproduced in tableau form by the Middlesex Regiment at this year's Royal Military Tournament.

In another of Lady Butler's pictures, "After the Bittle, Tel-el-Kebir," all the Highlanders are lustily cheering General Wolseley, with the exception of a piper who, perhaps needless to add, is justifying his existence in a more musical way.

have supplanted the picturesque headdresses which occasionally brightened our drab thoroughfares in the good old prewar days. The band of a line regiment in its Sunday best, as the civilian would say, is admirably depicted in Walter Horsley's painting, "A Friendly Power in Egypt," exhibited at the Royal Academy many



THE DRUMMER OF HIS MAJESTY'S FIRST LIFE GUARDS.

By A. J. Munnings, R.A.

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Though the Army is practically khakiclad nowadays, regimental bands and the drums and fifes still retain the full-dress uniform, but in most cases fatigue caps

years ago. This is a very lifelike representation of the First Welch Regiment marching through the Muski, Cairo, in 1889. The striking figure of the Drum-Major,



"A FRIENDLY POWER IN EGYPT."

Reproduced from a photograph of the original picture by W. Horsley of the 1st Welch Regiment at Cairo, 1889, by kind permission of the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion The Welch Regiment, owners of the original.

followed by the scarlet-coated bandsmen playing their brass instruments, forms a strange but pleasing contrast to the native bazaar loungers grouped on either side of the thoroughfare. In a similar subject, "Dinna Ye Hear the Pipes?" G. Merry has painted a masterly study of a kilted Drum-Major at the head of the Camerons' pipers. The latter wear the Glengarry caps, but the Drum-Major, a noble figure with his staff, has the showy feather bonnet with flowing tails, the head-dress recently adopted by the pipers of the Scots Guards.

Batteries of the Royal Artillery have, in the words of an old song, "No music to remind them of the girls they've left behind," but they are not without their trumpeters, and the well-known painter of artillery subjects, Gilbert Holiday, has commemorated their presence at a memorable event in his striking picture, "The Last Post." The painting needs little explanation. Just the empty flight of steps leading to St. Paul's Cathedral and, at the head of the steps, the serried lines of massed trumpeters of the Royal Horse Artillery in full-dress uniform sounding the awe-inspiring call which gives its name to the picture. The scene thus depicted on canvas was enacted in real life on St. George's Day in the year following the Armistice, the occasion being the memorial service to all ranks of the Royal Artillery who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War. During the War the artist held a commission in the R.F.A., and his picture has an honoured place in the Royal Artillery mess at Woolwich.

Another celebrated military painting in which a regimental call figures in the title is Lady Butler's "The Réveil in the Bivouac of the Scots Greys on the Morning of Waterloo—Early Dawn," painted in Ireland in the early 'nineties and duly hung at the Royal Academy. It is a charming study of the lines of troopers roused from their slumbers by the notes of the "Réveillé" sounded by a pair of mounted trumpeters whose distant figures are silhouetted against the sky, a line of the regiment's famous grey chargers being picketed near by. The figure of the dying trumpeter of this regiment in the charge at Waterloo is easily discernible in the same artist's well-known picture, "Scotland For Ever."

Fred Roe's "Changing Guard at Buckingham Palace," exhibited at the Royal Academy two years ago, depicts one of the Guards' bands playing the old guard out, but unfortunately the artist preferred his subjects in their winter garb, for all the glory of the scarlet and gold remains hidden beneath the bandsmen's great-coats. Too numerous for mention are the many such pictures of bands leading bodies of troops. In his delightful painting, "The Girl I Left Behind Me," in the Leicester Corporation Gallery, Charles Green shows a battalion marching to port prior to embarkation for the scene of operations in the Peninsula, but he follows in the footsteps of many other artists in introducing only the tail end of the band. Nevertheless his realistic study of the traditional British drummer-boy stands out well on the canvas. In George W. Joy's painting, "The King's Drum Shall Never Be Beaten for Rebels," is represented the well-known episode in the Irish Rebellion of the British drummer facing his captors after the battle of Goree, one of his legs being firmly planted on his drum, through which he has just patriotically kicked a hole.

Admirers of J. M. W. Turner's works will be surprised to know that the great landscape painter, when a boy, executed a drawing of a drummer of the Coldstream Guards. It is now in the British Museum and was executed for Colnaghi for the purpose of colouring the once popular aquatints of military uniforms by Kirk.

One of the many purchases of military subjects made by Her Majesty the Queen at the recent exhibition at the Goupil Galleries of the Earl of Ypres' pictures was a water-colour of the band of the Grenadier Guards at Windsor. His water-colour of the six Guards' drum-majors leading the massed bands across the Horse Guards Parade at the Trooping of the Colour was much admired at the 1927 Exhibition of Pictures and Drawings by Officers and Ex-Officers of the Regular Army.

By reason of their splendid uniforms, the Guards have always been favourite subjects with artists. The late R. Caton Woodville once painted a picture of a Guards' drummer to which is attached an anecdote which in the faithful portrayal of the details

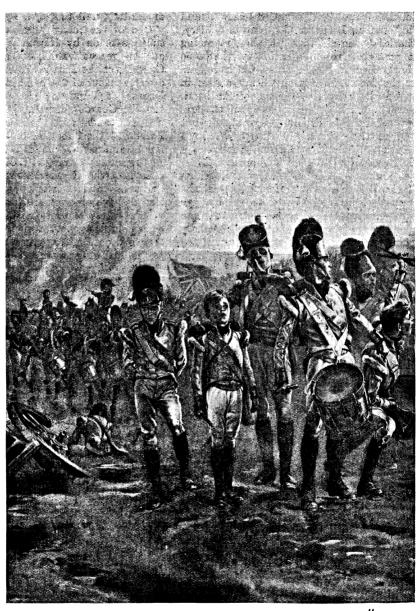


"DINNA YE HEAR THE PIPES?"

From the picture by G. Merry, reproduced by permission of Messrs. C. W. Faulkner & Co., Ltd., owners of the copyright and publishers of the plate.

(Drum-Major and Pipers of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.)

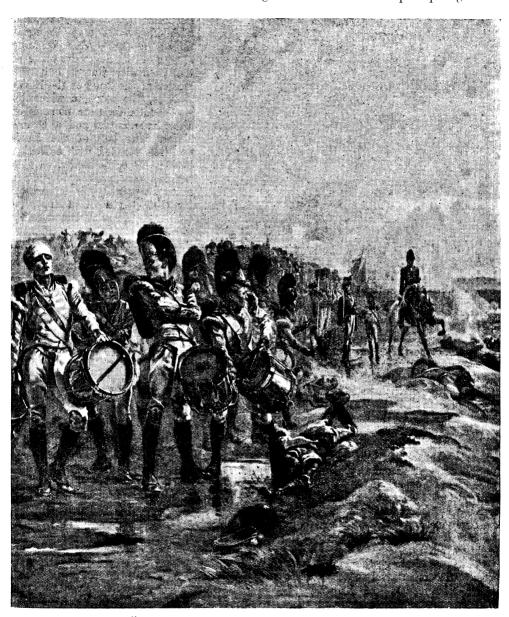
of military dress reflects to that talented artist's credit. On seeing the picture at Windsor the Duke of Connaught called the artist's attention to what he thought was he made no such mistake, the Duke sent for the bugler (who at other times is a drummer) of the Castle Guard. One can picture the pleasure on the artist's face as



"STEADY,
By Lady
The 57th ("The Die-Hards")
Reproduced by permission of

an error in the mounting of the braiding on the drummer's tunic. Since Caton Woodville was firm in his conviction that the Duke turned from the summoned boy after a critical scrutiny of the fringe on his tunic and exclaimed: "By Jove, Mr. Woodville, you are right after all!" In Windsor Castle, by the way, is a fine painting of a mounted negro trumpeter of the Household Cayalry.

Last Réveil, Morning of Waterloo," painted for her "one man show" held at the Leicester Galleries on the centenary of that great battle. One of the principal figures in



THE DRUMS AND FIFES!"
Butler.
at Albuhera, 1811.
Messrs. Goupil & Cie, Bordeaux.

Of pictures of foreign military musicians by British artists mention should be made of Lady Butler's large oil, "The Cuirassiers' the late R. Caton Woodville's "Waterloo, 1815," is a trumpeter of a French cavalry regiment riding past the Emperor and his staff.



collectors for their single figure subjects, E. Hull is certainly the best known in so far as bandsmen's uniforms are concerned. His Drum-Majors of the 17th and 87th Regiments may be menalongside $_{
m tioned}$ his costume studies of the negro drummer of the Grenadier Guards and the Master of the Band of the Royal Marines, the corps to which he also devoted separate pictures of a drummer, a fifer and a Drum-Major. The last of the black minstrels paraded with a British band in the early 'forties. Hull's pictures were lithographed just a century ago and are interesting for their pertrayal of the contemporary dress of our military musicians. Attractive prints of

bered chiefly by military print

MASTER OF THE BAND, ROYAL MARINES.

Reversing the tables, one could mention if space permitted a few pictures of our soldier musicians as seen by the French artist. piper of the Black Watch is conspicuous in A. de Neuville's masterly picture, "Tel-el-Kebir." One of the greatest military artists that the world has ever known was a Frenchman, Detaille. On being asked by Lady Butler (our greatest military artist) why he did not patronise. our Army in his works, he replied, "I would like to, but the red frightens me."

Before concluding this brief survey of comparatively modern artists' impressions of British military musicians, \mathbf{a} passing reference should be made to a few works of the older artists. In Sir E. Landseer's pitiful painting "War," a discarded trumpet with its embroidered banner lying amidst fallen Household Cavalrymen and dead chargers reveals the calling of one hapless warrior. Of artists remem-



DRUM-MAJOR, 17TH REGIMENT.

(Now the 1st Leicestershire Regiment.) From a coloured lithograph by E. Hull, published in 1830, reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Robson & Co., Ltd. pipers of Highland regiments are by no means plentiful, but those engraved in the year of the Crimean War of the 93rd and 42nd Highlanders from B. Clayton's pictures are worthy of mention. The bravery of a notable piper at the battle of Vimiera was the subject of a quaint old picture by Manskirch, and there are other similar epi-

the field is to cheer the hearts of those who wear the King's uniform.

Military musicians of the Indian Army have received little attention from British artists, but an outstanding picture at last year's exhibition of works by the Earl of Ypres was a painting of the band of the 45th (Rattray's) Sikhs. A striking study of



DRUM-MAJOR AND DRUMMERS, 45TH RATTRAY'S SIKHS.

From the picture by Major A. C. Lovett in the volume "The Armies of India," published by Messrs. A. & C. Black, Ltd.

sodes rather crudely commemorated by contemporary artists long since forgotten.

Though "the picture of the year" may never again be that of a military musician, one looks forward to each display at Burlington House in the hope, however vain, that some talented painter may commit to canvas a worthy impression of one or several of that noble profession whose rôle both in the piping times of peace and in

the drummers and drum-major of this same regiment was painted by the late Brigadier-General A. C. Lovett, who, when serving as a Major in the Gloucestershire Regiment some twenty years ago, executed over seventy pictures of uniforms of Indian regiments. Ackermann's series of coloured aquatints of Indian military costumes published in the 'forties includes one of a bandmaster and musician of the Madras Infantry.

WARIN-THE GARDEN

THE WONDERFUL WORLD • AT OUR DOORS •

By TREVOR WILLIAMS

With photographs by the Author

⊚

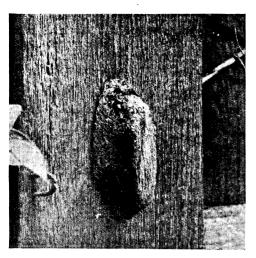
If "great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em," the reverse is certainly true of the lesser inhabitants of our gardens, with the important difference that what biting is done is done to some purpose. We imagine the gaily coloured butterflies and moths leading an idyllic existence flitting from flower to flower, but



THE ROOF OF THE PUSS MOTH'S HOME, showing how, by careful attention to the graining of the wood, the shell is made to harmonize with its surroundings.

when we call to mind that the beautiful colouring is designed to camouflage the wearer from larger creatures continually seeking to devour it, our opinion of the life of a butterfly must undergo considerable modification. The border-line between instinct and intelligence in such creatures is but vaguely sketched, and it may be, after all, that the butterfly knows nothing of the real purpose of its colouring; but from the care with which the caterpillars protect and conceal the chrysalis from which they will emerge, come springtime, as butterflies and moths, it is fairly arguable that some sense of lurking danger is ever present, How else can one explain the extraordinary labour that the caterpillar of the Puss Moth (Dicranura vinula) bestows upon the winter home of its chrysalis? Here is no mere nest or web, but a feat of building worthy to be classed with the works of Wren, and with an internal "finish" that would be the envy of many cabinet-makers.

The accompanying photographs give but a moderate idea of the skill with which such a hibernating place will be constructed. The first shows how a spoon-shaped hollow was gnawed out of a fence post. The displaced wood was not wasted, but fashioned, speck by speck, with the aid of some gummy secretion, into a hard shell in shape somewhat resembling a half walnut shell and about an inch and a quarter long. In the lower photograph on the next page this shell is shown upraised; when discovered it was sealed by the edges to the post, and within lay the chrysalis, The



NEST OF THE PUSS MOTH IN POSITION.

Surrounding greenery has been pulled back for the purpose of the photograph. When first found the shell was so evenly lighted as to throw hardly any shadow and was consequently almost invisible. Note how on the flat top the graining of the post is imitated.

remarkable part about the shell, however, is the manner in which it was constructed. On the inner side it bore a speckly appearance as of pieces of fresh sawdust glued together, and it was quite smooth and regularly domed. On the outside, however, it bore a rough appearance, dull grey in colour to match the fence-post, while the top was flattened and most cleverly arranged to present a "grained" appearance exactly matching the graining of the post.

In this little "dug out" the chrysalis was fairly secure from the attacks of enemies, while a section of the wall was built of easily removed material to facilitate the emergence of the moth in due season.

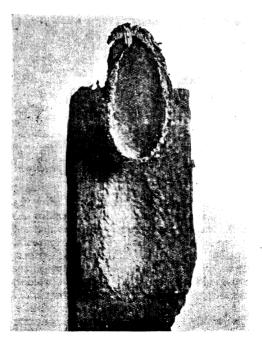
This was discovered in an ordinary back garden: one could hardly find a better example of the skill and perseverance of the so-called "lower creatures." How long the work occupied I do not know: one would give much for a skill in proportion to one's advantages of equipment, and so on!

It must be confessed that owing to the habits of the caterpillar, it is not easy to come at such builders actually at work; but fortunately there is another little builder, at least equally skilful, whose operations are fairly well advertised. The Leaf Cutting Bee gives unmistakable notice of its presence by its habit of snipping semi-circular pieces out of the green leaves of rose-bushes. She is a quick worker, and will rapidly make off with fifty per cent of the leaves of a

fair-sized bush: her operations can hardly be ignored, in fact. Curiously few people take the trouble to follow up the industrious cutter, to see what she does with the leaves, but to those anxious to know something of the hidden warfare going on in the garden I would say—note carefully the spot to which the bee carries the leaves and in due course take steps to examine her handiwork.

The favourite building site is a hollow in some rotten wood-an old fence, for instance. Hither the bee carries, bit by bit, the spoil from the rose-bush, and she will then proceed to line the hollow in the wood with the pieces of leaf in such a way that if you can remove some of the overlying wood you will find a long, tightly rolled tube of leaves—rather like a cigar, and in size rather smaller than the ordinary Virginia cigarette. The neatness with which the work is done compels admiration, especially when one takes into account the enormous speed at which it was carried A couple of seconds suffice for the detachment of a piece of leaf, then off to the nest she flies, to return after a very brief interval for another piece of leaf.

Although the whole nest resembles a single cylinder, it consists actually of a

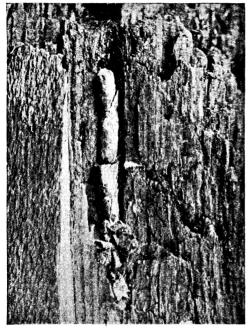


WINTER HOME OF THE PUSS MOTH CHRYSALIS.

The photograph shows the shell-like roof upraised, and how the fence-post was hollowed to provide at once a cavity in which the chrysalis could lie and material for the shell.

number of compartments, all neatly fitted together, and not the least interesting part of these compartments is the little "lid" with which each is sealed.

Now, why should the bee go to all this trouble? If you know anything of the ways of garden warfare, you will know that she is making provision for her offspring. Each compartment of the nest is filled with honey, and at the top is deposited an egg; then the lid is applied and sealed down. If all goes well, the egg hatches, master or miss bee makes an enormous meal of honey



THE WORK OF THE LEAF-CUTTING BEE.

In order to disclose the nest, the overlying section of wood has been removed. Originally the nest lay in a narrow tunnel bored into the post, and the leaves were placed as a lining to the tunnel.

and settles down to sleep it off during the winter, until the coming of summer arouses her. But alas for parental hopes and cares! It frequently happens that other parents, equally providential but less industrious, discover the bee's nest and with specially provided tools bore a hole through the sides, inject eggs of their own which shortly hatch out voracious grubs that, cuckoo-like, devour all the honey and leave none for master bee, to his fatal disadvantage. (The upper photograph on the next page shows evidence of such a raid.)

These are but two of many fascinating glimpses of the ceaseless warfare waged between the creatures inhabiting our gardens. To eat, and to escape being eaten, seem the principal occupations of our self-invited guests. But most warfare has a constructive side can we only find it, and so it is that our gardens provide ample entertainment for all who have eyes to see the elaborate and really wonderful works undertaken as part of the ceaseless conflict.

Every one is aware that the colours of flowers have an important bearing on the fertilization carried out by the industrious pollen-bearing bee; and every one, or nearly every one, airily dismisses the matter as a chemical action in which chlorophylls are concerned. To the inquiring mind, however, that is far from being the end of the matter, and it is even possible to imagine a kind of rivalry among the flowers for the attention of the bees. This picture grows less fanciful as one inquires into the manner in which flowers change colour. Dr. Bose has shown that flowers and plants breathe; at times it is not difficult to imagine them thinking too.

Bees are generally credited with a keen sense of colour: actually, however, they are colour-blind so far as black, dark grey and scarlet are concerned. They have a very keen sense of smell, and it is probable that they recognize species of plants more by smell than by colour. One very remarkable discovery in this connection has recently been made by Professor K. von Frisch. He had been struck with the fact that when a bee returned to the hive well laden with honey it frequently performed a kind of dance, during which it "nudged" other bees in the vicinity and at the conclusion of which all the nudged bees would crowd off to the flower from which the heavy load had been brought by the dancing bee. Von Frisch made a number of extremely ingenious and interesting experiments, the result of which was to indicate that the "nudging" was the equivalent of titivating the smell-sense of the other bees, so that when the titivator sailed off to the flower whence she derived the alluring smell the other bees followed.

The spider is well worth watching as the familiar—or unfamiliar—web is spun. Have you ever seen the beginning of such a task? Have you ever wondered how those immensely long threads are strung across paths or from tree to tree? The spider may or may not have given Bruce the moral support and stimulus suggested in the poem, but Bruce was a man of sense, and it is by no

means improbable that he more than once admired and learned from the humble spider. And if the wide-flung webs are cleverly hung, what shall we say of the wonderful little funnel-shaped nets to be found in the cracks of shed doors and walls? The whole mass of threads is so intricate that it seems impossible that any living being could weave them and yet itself remain disentangled.

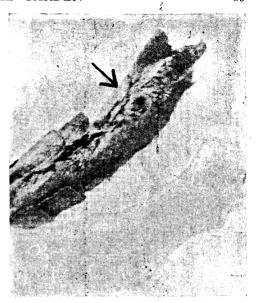
The building operations of the puss moths have been mentioned; but most moths pursue a method more akin to that of the spider, and surround the chrysalis with a gossamer-like shawl of the finest silk. Owing to their habits of doing this on fruit trees and in other undesirable places, they do not often get the attention they deserve. Next time you are about to destroy one of these little households, examine the workmanship first: you will find the moment or so well repaid.

One of the little mysteries of gardening is the discovery of blister-like protuberances on the leaves of certain trees. Occasionally these are flesh-coloured (another protective coloration device), and on being sliced neatly in half are found to contain a small grub, or larva. The interesting question is, How did the grub get inside the blister, or the gall, as it should be termed? There is



A "CLOSE-UP" OF THE LEAF-CUTTING BEE'S HOME,

showing how carefully the leaves are folded and how each section of the nest is closed with a well-cut "lid" of rose-leaf.

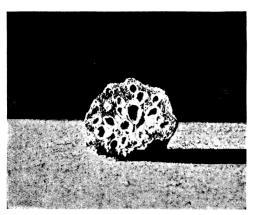


AN ENEMY HATH DONE THIS.

The tell-tale hole in the side of the bee's nest through which an enemy intruded eggs of its own.

no visible entrance, no sign of an entry having been sealed up. The answer is that the gall grew up around the grub ere the grub was hatched from an egg. It is a matter of the preservation of the species. eggs are laid by the gall-fly by means of a special tool called an ovipositor: with this she bores into the heart of a leaf or other selected part of a tree and so is able to lay her eggs beyond the reach of the enemies most feared. Different kinds of gall-insects frequent different kinds of trees, and their activities produce different kinds of galls, of which some are here illustrated. But whether the result be an oak-apple or merely a small wart like half a green pea, the cause is irritation. Whether the irritation is the result of a special fluid injected with the egg, or whether from the movement of the growing larva, or whether the larva itself ejects irritant fluids, is not certainly known; but it has been discovered that when the larva stops feeding, then the gall stops growing and hardens into a protective covering in which the insect pupates, subsequently gnawing its way out.

Galls are not usually attractive in appearance, but they are worth attention. While some are of quite simple structure, others are extraordinarily complex. One and all, however, have an air of mystery which inevitably recalls the time-honoured query, "How did the chicken get inside the egg?"



SECTION OF GALL COMMONLY FOUND ON OAK-TREES.

Some galls shelter not one larva but many. When first cut, each of the cells contained a larva, or grub, of the gall-fly.

It is worth noting, before leaving the gall-insects and their fascinating little homes, that these parasites are themselves at times the unwilling hosts of uninvited guests—inquilines, as they are called.

The problem of hosts and guests is another interesting side of garden warfare, though it is more easily observed in vegetation than among the insects. The extent to which plants "war" against each other is very remarkable: who, for instance, would credit the slender birch with the power it wields against the firs? Yet almost any keen naturalist can show you a wood in which an advancing wave of birches is gradually sweeping forward, to the cost of the firs which originally monopolized the tract.

The area usual to our gardens does not give scope for the watching of such largescale operations, but one cannot ignore the obstinate persistence with which "twitch" grass will send its runners in all directions, and will thrive and multiply despite the most rigid digging and hoeing. Another pertinacious and uninvited guest to which we often have to play the part of ungracious hosts is the little convolvulus. In itself it is not unattractive, and occasionally it does us a good turn by covering an ugly piece of fence or an old shed. Generally, however, as is the way of uninvited guests, it sets itself down in our most cherished bed and by way of showing its affection begins to twine closely round every bush and plant within reach. It may compensate some perspiring gardener to realize that the convolvulus

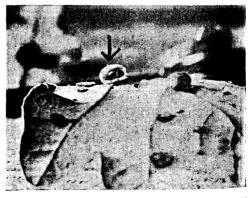
is merely fulfilling its own destiny: it has no grudge against him!

This question of host and guest can give rise to some interesting discussions. Most people, for instance, will hold that mistletoe, most romantic of parasites, grows only upon apple trees. Such is far from being the case, however, and those in the habit of taking country rambles may well amuse themselves by noting mistletoe clumps and the many species of host.

The most common of parasites are the fungi. When one has gratefully admitted that yeast and the luscious mushroom are fungi, one has said all that is pleasant concerning the fungi in general. Is there any class of organism so generally repellent? Even the toadstools and puffballs have an air of the unreal, and when Nature sets out to produce a fungus with vivid colours the result is as evil as a Borgia potion.

It is often supposed that the "brackets" attached to trees are mere excrescences formed from some spore blown into a crevice in the bark. Were this so, the fungus of the type illustrated would be far less harmful. The origin of these "brackets" is a mycelium within the tree itself. Its manner of entry cannot always be stated; a favourite method is by way of some injured part of the tree. Once within the bark crust, however, the fungus insidiously sets to work, and such is its power that it may destroy a great part of the tree before any outward sign appears.

One of our garden wonders which is often underrated, if not entirely overlooked, is the so-called "cuckoo spit." If you take the trouble to inspect one of the little blobs of froth which appear on various plants in



GALLS OF VARIOUS TYPES ON THE UNDER-SIDE OF AN OAK-LEAF.

Note the gall cut open to show occupant.

June and July, you will find in the centre a small green-yellow insect rejoicing in the name of aphrophora. This little being might well have been in the mind of the gentlemen who composed that recent favourite of the music-halls and street-organs, "I'm for ever blowing bubbles," for the preparation of froth is the life-work of the aphrophora. Here, again, is a remarkable instance of the protective instinct of nature's smalle t children. Whether you take the view that the envelope of froth is devised as a protection against predatory birds who might otherwise be inclined to gobble Mr. Aphrophora, or whether it forms a protection against the weather, you must be prepared to admit that the insect itself has a fairly busy time. But the full wonder appears when we come to consider the further stages in the life of the insect. It has been ascertained that before beginning to construct this house of bubbles, the insect extracts a certain amount of sap from the leaf or stalk upon which it has settled, and this sap is used in the formation of the bubble froth. It sometimes happens that the stock of sap gives out before the required amount of froth has been prepared, in which case a new load is taken in and bubbling begins again.

Those desirous of witnessing one of nature's marvels should endeavour to keep close observation on one of these bubble-homes, for it is in these structures—miniature Crystal Palaces—that the larva changes into a pupa and so to final metamorphosis. Incredible as it may seem, the insects have the power of pricking some of the inner





THE DEADLY FUNGUS.

Two views of a tree illustrating the insidious manner in which a fungus attacks. The "brackets" are but outward and visible signs of the trouble within.



ANOTHER VIEW OF A GALLED OAK-LEAF.

bubbles so as to make space for movement within the "palace," while the outer skin of bubbles remains intact.

Small wonder that when, at last, they leave their cramped quarters the creatures become so extremely agile that they have earned the name of "flea-grasshoppers"!

One of the mysteries of nature, so far as the ordinary observer is concerned, is that what we are pleased to call "pests" are no less wonderfully made than some of the "higher" animals. This is, or should be,

one of the consolations attached to the habit the pests have of visiting us in swarms-we are afforded ample opportunity examining in a leisurely and comfortable manner some of the less appreciated marvels of nature! Few people have a good word for the gnat, yet his attainment of the air is fraught with such peril. which he so skilfully fights, that one cannot help entering a plea for him, at any rate when he is quite young. As far as the pupa stage his existence is much like that of other beings of his



"ROBIN'S CUSHION,"

the pretty red, flower-like gall often found on rose-bushes.

class: but at the moment of emergence from pupa to gnat he is a most fascinating insect. Within a semi-transparent envelope the perfect insect is formed, and when it is ready to emerge from the pupa state it lies on the surface of the water. Now the envelope begins to split and the gnat itself becomes visible—a fresh green easily distinguishable from the enveloping skin.

Now begins the feat for which the gnat is notable. The skin may be likened to a submarine floating on the surface but of so light a substance that a puff of wind will blow it hither and thither. It opens at one end, and almost immediately the gnat begins to emerge. Its head appears, and gradually more and more of the body, until at last it seems impossible that the insect can stand upright without further support, or that the frail skin on the end of which it stands can sustain its weight without tipping up. At this moment, in fact, the life of the gnat is in extreme peril, for although it has lately lived in water, water is now its greatest danger. Let but a puff of wind arise and the frail craft will capsize and the gnat is doomed. All being well, however, the insect continues to wriggle out of its little case without so disturbing it as to let the water in.

Now comes the extraordinary part. The gnat must know, from inherited instinct,

what peril water holds for it, yet it deliberately leans forward and places its forefeet upon the water! Capillary action no doubt accounts for the fact that the feet do not pierce the surface; at any rate, there the gnat stands until it has had time to unfold and dry its wings. Then in a twinkling it is off—to harry mankind!

It is a very perilous method of entering the world, but may it not be that the peril was purposely designed to limit the amazing multiplication of the species? In a calm garden pond there is little chance of wind upsetting the emerging gnat; but think of the enormous quantities that must be drowned every year while trying to become gnats on the ruffled surface of large ponds or lakes!

It is by spreading oil on gnat- and mosquito-breeding waters that many of the most virulent plagues have been suppressed in distant parts of the world.

There is much to be learnt from studying even a small garden. You may not bring away any deep truths, but if you have ever looked upon nature study merely as the hobby of those who spend days crawling in ditches or lying hidden in dummy trees, select almost any plant or insect in your garden and let your mind play about it, and you will be surprised by the tremendous possibilities that lie within a dozen yards of your own back door.



A "ROBIN'S CUSHION" CUT OPEN,

showing how the fibrous network surrounds cells in which are the larvæ of gall-flies.

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By I. I. BELL • 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

SYNOPSIS OF EARLIER CHAPTERS.

In a London hotel Flora Ballantyre, a Highland girl recently married, is called upon to "mother" a wee Spanish boy whose "madre" has died.

Nearly a quarter of a century passes. Flora, now Lady Ballantyre, and seven years a widow, has been gambling and is in serious financial difficulties. She is hoping that her son, Steve, whose money she has also risked, will become engaged to Winifred Charters, who has £80,000 of her own. But during a yachting cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Ailsa Maclean, and he is arranging another cruise in the Miranda during the following August. Luis, the young Spaniard whom Flora had befriended, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father s papers had made reference.

Faced with further depressions in "Flossies," Lady Ballantyre gets Luis to sell pictures and heirlooms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf

and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parchment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory. Lady Ballantyre

sees in a successful search the possibility of restoring her fortunes.

At Tobermory, Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the *Miranda* party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa. Hector's co-operation is essential if the treasure is to be recovered. He is a canny Scotsman, and his interest is only likely to be aroused if benefit will accrue to Ailsa, on whom he dotes.

Meanwhile Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, has arrived unexpectedly at Tobermory, and a strange motor-launch appears in the bay to land a mysterious foreigner, who gives the name of M. François Dracquier when booking a room at the hotel. Luis begins to suspect that his secretary in

Spain is taking a hand in the game.

(9)

After a dinner-party in the *Miranda*, Hector Maclean dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis immediately brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it. He will not be disturbing the new floor on so doubtful a quest, for "what would the people of Tobermory think?" In despair, Lady Ballantyre turns again to Luis. She has tried him a thought too far. Unsteadily he says: "It is a thousand years since I kissed your lips "-and lays his hands on her shoulders.

XIII.

IN his unlighted room Luis stood at the open port while his emotion slowly subsided. He had done the thing that a little while ago had been unthinkable, and the doing of it had shaken his being. He did. not regret the act, nor was he concerned about the consequences. There would be no consequences other than to himself. He had either angered Flora Ballantyre or amused her, and neither her anger nor her amusement would be of long duration. Whatever sensibility his kiss might have stirred in her would pass with the short night. So he believed. But from himself the memory of the moment would never pass. The feel of her mouth

had been as one drop of sweet water to a man athirst. The desert of days before him would be more arid than the waste of days behind. Never as now had he seen in Flora Ballantyre the one woman in the world.

The night was draped in black and silver. His sad eyes went a-wandering over the still, shining water, the dimly-showing woods, the changeless, heedless hills. Peace, peace . . . and no peace.

Here and there in Tobermory, like kindly eyes, lights glimmered still. His gaze came down to them from the hills. Yonder one, high up amid trees, he judged to be in the house of Hector Maclean-honest man. Another, lower down, to the right, went out

0 .

as he watched, and he felt an odd little pang. A third, on the shore, yellower, warmer than the others, held him a while. Other people's lights . . . other people's lives . . . houses . . . homes . . . husbands . . . wives . . . children . . . love . . .

His eyes closed. Under the port the tide lapped lazily at the *Miranda's* hull. There was no other sound in that spacious haven till the launch returning with Stephen left the shore.

Luis drew back from the port and waited till Stephen had come on board. Then he switched on the light. Blinking, he noticed on the dressing-shelf the packet he had received at the post office in the afternoon. There had been no earlier opportunity for looking at its contents, and he opened it now only because he expected it to contain the belated letter mentioned by Flora Ballantyre.

Her letter was there. He put aside the other enclosures, which included a note from his secretary, and opened it. She had told him it was written by her better self, a saying which, had he been less in love, might have suggested to him a reason for its comparative brevity. It thanked him for some money received by her banker, said unusually little about her hopes and fears regarding the treasure, and dwelt for a whole page on his exile in Spain and her wish that it might soon be ended. Nothing much for a starving lover, yet through it all Luis sensed a breath, as it were, of sweetness and warmth, such as never before had reached him from a letter of hers. This, indeed, was the woman he loved!

For a while he sat as in a trance, then looked at his watch. It was late, very late, and it was a mad thought; yet what if he were to tap ever so lightly at her door and whisper to her to come on deck? And what it she were to come—up there in the silver dusk and golden silence—and the two of them stand face to face, alone in the world? What words would be needed? What then would matter the treasure of Tobermory, the slain man in the mountains of Toledo, Stephen's career, poverty — what would anything matter but love?

In the same hour, Lady Ballantyre, still dressed, knelt at her bed, praying—not to God, but to Luis.

"Luis, Luis, ask me now, and everything shall be as you wish—everything! The jewels can go, Steve can have his own way. I will never speculate again. I will never

not wholly trust you. Oh, Luis, my Luis, hear me, come to me! Luis . . ."

But night is night, and morning is morning.

He would read her letter once more. He must not deceive himself.

The letter was written on a double sheet, and Lady Ballantyre's "page two" was actually "page four." There she had almost finished, only a sentence and her signature being carried to the inner page. Perhaps that was why Luis had not noticed at the first reading the thing which he now saw lying in the hinge of the thick paper—a short, rather coarse black hair.

With an abrupt expression of disgust, he blew it away, and in the next instant realised its significance. Finding Lady Ballantyre's envelope, he examined the back carefully under the electric bulb.

"The devil!"

The thing had been well, but not perfectly, done. Lady Ballantyre's letter had been opened—opened by Gaspar Muñez. But why? Had all her letters of the past three months been opened by the same hand?
... Ah!

What was the priest doing in Tobermory? Had Gaspar Muñez discovered the plot and in his spite turned informer? Had the priest been sent there to watch on behalf of the Church?

Yet what could the Church do? Luis had not left all to chance. To more than one learned lawyer in Madrid he had put the case, as a supposititious one-a question raised in some of his father's writings, upon which he had thoughts of enlarging in an essay of his own. And the gist of the lawyers' opinions had been to the effect that in the unlikely event of the Church making a claim, the claim would be rejected. It had happened so long ago; the only piece of evidence was a rag of parchment which could not be authenticated, and Scotland was part of a Protestant country. The jewels would belong entirely to the finder, for only gold and silver came under the law of Treasure Trove. "Oh, yes, it would be robbing the Church, if you like," one of the lawyers had said, smiling; "but you have not come to me, Don Luis, for moral advice."

No; the Church could do nothing—except discover that it was robbed by its most unworthy son, Luis de Lara, and Luis de Lara was, thank God, the only person whom the spite of Gaspar Muñez could hurt. It was well for Muñez then that all those leagues

lay between him and his employer; well, indeed, thought Luis, grimly, that they were not face to face, and a knife handy.

longing burned up anew. Let the hour be ever so late, the thought ever so crazy, he was going to put the hope of his life into a



And in the next instant Luis crossed himself.

The flame of anger sank low; the fire of

light tap and a soft whisper. If the respones were kind, if Flora came to him in that sweet and holy night, surely neither wealth nor apostasy, nor stain of blood, would matter to her, or to him.

He switched off the light, opened the door, and looked up and down the deck, saw only a solitary dim figure, the watch, brooding in the bows, and stepped out, his face pallid, his mouth dry, his heart thudding. A few paces, and he would be at the door of the deck-house.

With the third pace he stopped short. Light shone from the landing in the deck-house, the door of which was open; yet Luis was prepared for a light there. But he was not prepared for the light that shone on the deck from one of the windows of the lounge.

... Still, the light in the lounge might have been left burning through inadvertence.

... All the same, he had better go warily ...

Presently he was at the doorway of the deck-house, looking in, but not at the staircase which he had thought so discreetly to descend. His gaze was on the open entrance to the lounge, and the light therein was explained.

Steve Ballantyre was in the lounge. He was standing with his back to the doorway. Luis heard the clink of glass.

"The young fool!" very bitterly thought Luis, his castle of desire in ruins. "I'll leave him to it."

But he could not do that. Steve was a part of his life. He remembered the arms of Steve, a little chap, round his neck, the admiring eyes of Steve, a schoolboy, on his face in his soldier days. And, above all, Steve was Flora's son.

A little noisily Luis stepped over the coaming of the deck-house doorway and entered the lounge. Steve had set down the decanter and now, with his hand on the siphon, looked round swiftly.

"Hullo," he said sullenly. "Are you up

for the night, too?"

"I'm afraid the sea air has not yet got to work on me," Luis replied. "But it's a glorious night. What about a turn on the deck? It might——"

"Have a drink," said Steve, and sat down.
"I'll take a cigarette, thanks," said Luis, also seating himself, and opening the box on the convenient table. He noted that Steve's drink was not a big one; but the boy's cheeks and eyes, not to mention his manner, suggested that it was not the first since he had come on board. At dinner, that night, Luis had decided in his mind that Steve, though he took but two glasses of wine, was one of those men who ought not to take any.

Lighting the cigarette, he said carelessly: "I thought you did not like whisky, Steve."

"Did you?" Steve must have recognised the offensive in his own voice, for he added quickly: "Well, I don't, really—at least, not much. Only it seems to go with a night like this."

"I should not call whisky nectar," said Luis, with a small smile, "and surely this night is of the Gods. Take a walk with me, old man, and have that drink as a night-cap afterwards." He got up and stood waiting. "I shan't be very bright company—too lazy to talk—last night in the train, you know; but I hate walking the deck alone, so be a good host and come along."

"Righto." Steve rose slowly and

stretched himself.

It was as though Luis had emanated some calming influence. A minute ago, the younger man had been ripe for an outbreak. One wrong word, one wrong note, would have induced the explosion. A minute ago, he was hating Luis; now he was not quite sure that he ought to hate Luis, who had stood his friend all those years. Anyway, it was Ailsa who was to blame, in the first place. Habit; too, had something to do with his acquiescence. Never had he refused, always had he been proud, to take a walk with Luis de Lara. And, maybe, now he did not want Luis to imagine that he could not leave a drink untasted.

"I guess I shan't talk much, either," he said as they went out.

They walked for over an hour, almost silent, and then Steve began to yawn in an obvious and helpless fashion. Before long he gave in, stopping abruptly at the door of his cabin, a little way up the deck from that of Luis. It would seem that he had forgotten about his "night-cap."

"I'm dished! Good night," he said, covering a yawn with one hand and holding

out the other.

When his door had closed, Luis went and stood by the rail. Except on the pier, there was now no light burning in Tobermory. The night was changing. Its beauty and brilliance were failing. A thin grey mist crept in from the west.

Clang! Down below a fireman was starting to tend the furnaces. Presently a dark plume rose from the pale yellow funnel. A man relieved the watcher in the bows.

Unaware of the action, Luis took out a

cigarette and lit it. . . .

Too late now, Luis de Lara! The night wherein all things were possible is passing.

The hour of opportunity is past. And, white lids fallen at last over blue eyes, Flora Ballantyre, better self and all, sleeps.

XIV.

CAME another hazy, listless morning. At nine o'clock, Steve Ballantyre, first to appear on deck, stood by the rail, moodily smoking, idly regarding the grey motor-launch that had followed the *Miranda* into the Bay, the previous afternoon. Preparations for moving were in progress on board the little craft. The man who had registered at the Mishnish Hotel as François Dracquier, and who had received at the post office a letter bearing that name, appeared to be examining the motor, though in the manner of a novice, while the man who looked like a mechanic was getting up the anchor.

Steve was not much interested. He had slept not so badly, but slumber had not comforted his spirit nor soothed his nerves. He was still resentful, on edge. His midnight escort of old Maclean had been given for nothing. He had sought to learn certain things concerning Ailsa, and also Ronald, but Maclean, preoccupied, curt in speech, had tramped smartly up the hill, said "good night" and gone into his house, having checked or ignored his companion's questions.

Steve's thoughts turned to his mother. For the first time in his life, he was feeling keenly vexed with her. Why had she, and almost at the last minute, asked Winifred to join them on the yacht? Since she had wanted, as she declared she did, some feminine company, had she not friends of her own age to choose from? True, she had been going to invite Winifred's mother, before she remembered that that lady invariably spent August with her husband at his sporting lodge in Ross-shire; but that was no reason for inviting Winifred in her stead.

He did not dislike Winifred. On the contrary, he liked her better than any girl he knew—in London. He acknowledged her beauty; there had been moments when it had held, even moved him; he admired her smartness. There was, indeed, a certain sort of comradeship between them—in London. More than once he had felt her sympathy, and been gladly aware of it. But apart from all that, as he told himself now, her appeal was physical, whereas Ailsa's was far more that of a sweet nature than of a fresh prettiness. Winifred was a wonderful dance partner, but one could not be dancing

all the time; Ailsa was a mate, alike for the open air and the fireside. There was a sameness about all the London girls he knew. Ailsa was like none he had ever met. It did not occur to him that, possibly, he had fallen in love with the novelty.

And then there was Luis. Steve could hardly blame his mother for the presence of Luis on the Miranda, since he had himself proffered the invitation, four months ago, at Algeciras. But that, as he so well remembered, had been before—only a few minutes before—Luis made his shocking disclosure. During the passage of the months Steve had often wondered whether Luis would eventually accept the invitation. It was not till near the end of July that he learned from his mother that Luis was definitely coming. He had been hoping otherwise. He was ready enough to take his friend's hand, but would have given much to have prevented its touching Ailsa's. A clean hand, as far as he was concerned, it would redden, so to speak, if offered to the girl.

Steve could pity Luis with his ugly secret burden, and within the past twenty-four hours he had vaguely wondered if it were the only burden; but at the moment his pity had not much kinship with love. Familiar with Luis' light manner towards girls, he had seen little lightness in his manner towards Ailsa. Worse, Ailsa was apparently attracted by it, if not positively impressed. The thought of what might happen on the coming cruise was one that gnawed persistently.

The starting of its motor brought back his attention to the grey launch. As, gathering way, it slid under the *Miranda's* quarter, the man in the stern looked up, with a courteous salute, saying in a foreigner's English:

"Good morning, sir! It is the fine weather now. Do you sail away to-day?" "Yes; I believe so. You have a fast

boat."

"It is not so bad, but I have to try her best fastness yet. We go now to try it, out in the Sound of Mull. Good morning, and a pleasant day to you!"

Steve returned the wave, lit another cigarette, and watched the grey thing make for the narrow channel at a rapidly increasing pace. It is a fact that a man must be seriously worried, indeed, when the spectacle of high speed fails to give pause to his troublesome thoughts.

A faint, flowery fragrance wafting to his nostrils was as a call at his ear. He turned swiftly.

Winifred was there, bright-eyed, rose-leaf-complexioned, arrayed in the artful simplicity of the day, smiling.

"What were you dreaming about, Steve?

I was tempted to shout 'Boo!'"

He pointed to the grey boat fading into the haze. "For a cruiser, she is amazingly fast. Look!"

"Wonderful!" remarked Winifred, without shifting her attention from him. "So you did not go to bed early, after all," she said in tones of reproof, tender enough to have been delicious to the hearing of many a young man.

"Does that mean that you did not sleep well? I'm sorry," he said politely. "Yes, I thought it was only decent to see Mr.

Maclean home."

"I heard the launch, looked out, and saw you."

"And then you went to sleep?"

"Not till I had heard the launch come back. Am I looking so haggard?"

"What a question!" Luis had come out of his cabin. "Good morning, Miss Britannia! Good morning, Steve! It is I who am the haggard one. Last night I drank too much. Observe the quivering hand, the bleary eye!"

"Oh, rot!" said Steve, trying to make his laugh sound friendly. "Don't give him sympathy, Winifred. He would say any-

thing to get it."

"I hope you may have an awful headache all day, Señor de Lara," said Winifred. "I had no idea that an orgy was going on last

night."

"It is a wonder you did not hear the song of the siphon. That fatal 'sodda'!" Luis turned to Steve. "Is it true that we are setting out for the unknown, after breakfast?"

"I believe my mother has arranged all that. I cannot even tell where we are bound for," Steve replied. "But you know my mother, Luis!"

"I am, at any rate, making her acquaintance. Is not that, Miss Charters, as much as any man should say of any woman?"

"Such modesty merits reward," Miss Charters returned. "May your headache be better by dinner-time."

"A thousand thanks! Ah, here is Miss Maclean!" Ailsa was standing at the door of the deck-house, and he went over to her at once. "Good morning! You have slept well?"

"I am still sleeping." She laughed.
"All the cold water in Tobermory cannot

take the sleep from my eyes before I have been out in the fresh air. But now I am waking up." She greeted the others, adding: "I am to tell you from Lady Ballantyre to come down to breakfast. She is not wanting the bugle to be blown."

Luis contrived to be left alone on the deck, and lingered, gazing shorewards. He was half expecting to see a small boat bearing

towards the yacht.

"Are you looking at my father's house?" asked Ailsa, still in the doorway.

"I was thinking of your father," he answered, turning to her, with his friendly smile. "I was thinking how fond he is of his daughter."

"He is sometimes rather foolish about his daughter," she said. "Please to come

down to breakfast."

They were still at table when a note was brought to Lady Ballantyre. Taking it from the tray, she fumbled and dropped it.

"All right," Luis muttered to the attentive steward, and recovered it. "May I, Lady Ballantyre?" He took out an ivory cutter and slit the flap, then handed the letter to her, with a glance that seemed to have the effect of steadying her, for the sheet of paper carrying Hector Maclean's big, sprawling writing scarcely fluttered in her hand; and presently she folded and laid it down, saying:

"My cousin asks me to delay sailing till the afternoon. He wants us all to lunch at his house, and he wants you, Señor, if you can think of nothing better to do, to go to see him about eleven-thirty, when he will try to answer some of the—the antiquarian questions you asked him last night. He suggests that the rest of us, seeing the weather is so fine, should see something of the Mull coast, and he is sending Ailsa's motor-boat for us at eleven." With a fairly successful smile, Lady Ballantyre looked down the table. "Anyone objecting will, please, hold up the right hand."

"Good enough idea," said Steve, taking a glance at Ailsa, which was intercepted by

Winifred.

With a shy, apologetic laugh, Ailsa put up her hand. "If you do not mind, Lady Ballantyre, I will be going ashore. Kate is a very good housekeeper, but my father will be so anxious about the lunch that he will be driving her crazy; so it will be best that I am there to stand between them. I will not be interfering with the antiquarian business!"—a friendly nod to Luis, who was

wondering how much she had unwittingly interfered already.

"Surely it is not necessary, dear," said Lady Ballantyre kindly, and none too firmly. It would be all to the good if the girl were out of Steve's reach during Luis' absence from the party.

"It's awfully nice of your father, Miss Maclean, but it seems a sin that you should sacrifice a jolly morning," Winifred remarked, ever so sweetly, for Steve's benefit. "I'm sure we should all be happy with bread and cheese in your pretty home."

Ailsa's head went up. "It is not the custom of my father to give bread and cheese to his visitors—his friends, Miss Charters," she amended on a more gracious note. "And he would be very much grieved if you did not all enjoy your lunch in his house; and I am certain it will not be an enjoyable lunch unless I am there to prevent Kate from being flustered. So there it is, and what must be must be."

Not till the white launch came alongside did Lady Ballantyre discover that she did not feel like a water trip. She did not, in fact, say so until Steve was on board the launch, waiting to give a hand to Winifred, who was making a very pretty motion picture on the accommodation-ladder, and an embarrassingly delightful one for the young Highland boatman who, unlike his employer, had never seen a pantomime.

When the launch had sheered off, with Steve looking rather thundery, Lady Ballantyre turned to Luis, saying: "Of course, I must go with you to my cousin's."

"Of course!" He nodded in the direction of the launch. "Is not everything turning out as you could wish?"

"You feel that Hector has changed his mind since last night?" she whispered eagerly.

"Yes, the poor man lay awake all night, thinking of his daughter as a wealthy girl. There could be but one ending. He fell!" His voice softened. "Be at peace, Lady. You are drawing near to the haven of your desire."

"Haven sounds good," she said, with a poor smile, "for I am feeling tired, Luis." She turned quickly. Ailsa was stepping from the deck-house. "Amuse her till I come back. I have a letter to write. We shall be going ashore in ten minutes or so."

Luis joined the girl, who was first to speak.

"I am thinking it is very nice of you,

Señor, to be going to see my father, when you might have been having a splendid run in the launch, this fine morning. Still, my father is paying you a compliment, for he very, very seldom sees anybody in the morning, except on business. But,"—before he could respond—"I am afraid Lady Ballantyre is not in very good spirits. Just now I thought she was looking sad and, maybe, a little wearied." Her frank eyes were on his face.

"She is rather tired," he said. "She has been overdoing it in London. June and July are exhausting months there, you know, and Lady Ballantyre does not know when to give in. That is all that is wrong with her, I am sure."

"Well, well, I dare say you are right," Ailsa assented, her glance drifting to the waters of the Bay; "and she has not had time yet to get the good of being quiet on the yacht. . . . See!"—pointing to the treasure-seekers' barge—"the diver is going down! That is the sun striking the big eye in the helmet."

"Are you interested in this treasure-hunt, Miss Maclean?"

"Now and then. It is not taking very much to interest us in Tobermory.—No, no! I do not mean that we feel so dull in Tobermory, though it is a quiet place after the towns. Still, the hunting has been going on for a long time now, and, maybe, some of us are getting used to it."

"If they were to bring up a million pounds, you would be more interested?"

She laughed. "If they were doing that before I was a hundred years old, I would be very much interested, indeed!"

"Have you ever wondered what you would do with a million pounds?"

"We are not thinking of millions in Tobermory!"

"But you have not lived all your life in Tobermory. You have seen quite a lot of the world."

"Just enough to make me wish for more." Her hand flew to her mouth. "Oh, Señor, you will not be telling my father I said that!"

"Neither your father nor anyone else."

Her look was troubled, yet frank. "What is the matter with me? I have known you not so much as a whole day, and I have told you a secret!"

"It slipped out. Things do that, sometimes, you know."

"It has never slipped out before."

"Then it is a fine thing to have happened

to me. I can hope that you trusted me, if

only unconsciously."

"It is the first time I have ever been unconscious." Next moment—"What a daft thing to say! Well, it is nothing, if you will not tell anybody. For, really and truly, I am quite happy in Tobermory—oh, very happy, indeed!"

He asked permission to smoke, and, astonished, she shyly granted it. He proffered

his case.

"If I were in London, or abroad, I would be taking one," she said, "but my father would have a fit if I was smoking in Tobermory. All the same, Tobermory is not so old-fashioned as some people may be thinking."

There was a pause till he said, rather abruptly: "Are you fond of jewels? Look-

ing down into that clear water makes me think of emeralds."

"Except in shops, I have seen very few fine jewels close at hand—only Lady Ballantyre's. They are lovely. But, I dare say I could be fond of jewels, for I am a very vain girl, though "—smiling at him—" you might not imagine it. Once, when I was in Edinburgh, my father sent me thirty pounds to buy frocks and things, and I very nearly spent all the money on a pendant. You see, my neck was not brown in Edinburgh, as it is in Tobermory. But I turned back at the very door of the jeweller's shop."

"What made you turn back?"

"What makes people turn back from something that would be wrong, Señor?" "But we don't always turn back, Miss Maclean—not all of us, anyway."



"Steve was on board the launch, waiting to give a hand to Winifred, who was making a very pretty motion picture on the accommodation-ladder."



would be giving me on my birthdays, and at

the New Year—and that will be all the jewels I am possessing. But remember, please, I did not say that I was fond of jewels-only that I could be fond—which is another thing -is it not, Señor?"

"Another thing entirely! It means that you would not-if you had that million pounds - turn back from the tempting

door."

"Indeed, I would just walk in!"

"And what would you buy first?"

She considered gravely before she an-"I am thinking I would first be buying a slave bangle, for I have been wearing short sleeves all the summer, and my arm is the same colour nearly all the way up. You see?"

"I see." Luis' mouth gave a little tender twitch. "But the bangle would not make much of a hole in the million, even if you bought the best in the shop. So what

next?"

"Oh, a pendant with a sea-blue stone and a thin chain—so thin you could hardly see it; and I would be paying thirty pounds exactly for it, just to remind me of what a good girl I once was! Do you think that would be fearfully extravagant?"

She glanced at him and mistook the

tenderness for amusement.

"It is too bad of you to be leading me on, and then to be laughing at me," she said good-humouredly. "No, not one word! I do not mind a bit. And I am wondering what is keeping Lady Ballantyre."

"I will go and see," said Luis. "Probably she has found another letter to write. Still, it is time we were going ashore."

He found his hostess in a cabin which she

had converted into a sort of office. She was in the act of stamping an envelope.

"I'm ready now," she said.

"One moment, Lady. I want you to write a letter to your London jeweller, and order a slave bangle-eighteen carat-and a pendant with a blue stone—I fancy she meant an aquamarine—and the thinnest chain possible." He laid some notes on the table at her hand. "I leave it to you, and trust you not to bring me into it.'

"Luis, don't be foolish," she said, a little "You must not throw away your money—though I know I'm the last person who should say such a thing to you-"

"Please! We have been talking of jewels, and I discovered that the bangle and pendant were her chief desires. Let her have her desires. She will prize those little things, coming from you, far more than all that are coming to her, as we hope, out of that well. Oblige me, Lady; write now, and post it when we get on shore."

"Apart from anything else, she would

wonder at such a gift from me."

"She would not wonder at the Crown Jewels from you! Write!"

Unwillingly she took up her pen. "Luis," she said slowly, without looking up, "it is early to ask, but what do you think of Ailsa?"

"I think she is a darling," he replied, his eves on the fair head.

Lady Ballantyre made a small sound,

something like a laugh.

"Well," she said, "if you will run away back to her, I will write to the jeweller."

But for awhile after he had gone she sat still—quite still.

A further instalment of "Gambler's Hope" will appear in our next issue.

LIMITATIONS.

 ${f V}$ OU ask me for a song to reach the heavens In glorious melody. But I can sing Only a phrase or two, subdued and plaintive, Some long-forgotten, trivial little thing.

You ask for love such as a god might give you, Transcendent, perfect. I can only give The little, human love of warmth and nearness, A little, earth-bound love,—to help you live.

VIOLET GILLESPIE.

LITTLE COUSINS

By FRANK SWINNERTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

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I.

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T was a bright day in June, and Honey-suckle Cottage was bathed in sunshine. The doors and windows were all wide open, and bees hummed in and out among the flowers and the straggling weeds. One of them, by mistake, flew in at a window upon the ground floor, tried to withdraw, and mistook a window-pane for the clear air. She was annoyed, and buzzed. Zzzzzzz.

Mrs. Harvard, engaged in writing a letter to the Editor of the Anti-Humanitarian. slowly awoke to the fact that she was being exasperated by an odd sound. She had just written the words "And Man was Given the Duty of Looking After ALL Dumb Things, In Spite of All you, Sir, may SAY to the Contrary," when she realised that whatever bees may be in the insect world, they are certainly not dumb creatures. Wearily, with a distracted couple of fingers to her ears, she resumed (in her head) the composition of her letter of protest. considered the matter the fingers fell away from her ears, and the noise of the angry bee entered her consciousness once more.

"Bother!" said Mrs. Harvard. She rose from the bureau at which she was sitting. and dragged herself to the window. Once there, she could not make up her mind how to release the bee from her predicament. "Be off," she remarked feebly. The bee continued to buzz. Zzzzzzzz. Zzzzzzzz. "Oh dear," moaned Mrs. Harvard, going out of doors, into the garden. Her curious dressing-gown, which she always wore, trailed behind her, gathering dust from the path, and catching the brambles—for Mrs. Harvard had a rather wandering manner of walking, and did not look where she was going.

Fortunately, at this moment, just as Mrs. Harvard was ricocheting from a large and prickly rambler rose towards the hedge (a thorn) which ran beside the path from the front door of the cottage, Hubert straggled

in at the gate. Hubert, Mrs. Harvard's elder child and only son, was a large youth with a casual manner. His arms stuck two or three inches out of his sleeves, at the elbows of which there were holes due to Hubert's habit of lounging upon his elbows whenever he sat at table. His hair was fair, and unruly; he wore no hat or tie, and his shirt was open at the neck; while his manner of walking was nothing more nor less than a slouch.

"'Lo, Mother," said Hubert. "Seen

Pen?

"What, dear?" inquired Mrs. Harvard, thinking favourably of all dumb things.

"Pen. She out?"

"Oh, there's a bee in the room, Hubie. I wish you'd get it out for me. Making such a noise!"

"Oh, bother! All right." He slouched off, while Mrs. Harvard wandered as far as the gate and looked out from it, in quest of her husband. She wanted to ask him about — What was it she had wanted to ask him? Never mind; she would think of it later.

"Moth-er!" shouted Hubert from with-

n. "Got anything to eat?"

Why, the boy was always wanting something to eat! He had only just had his breakfast. Surely it couldn't be time yet for another meal! Sighing, Mrs. Harvard trailed up the path again, in time to see her son expel an even angrier bee from the window of the sitting-room. To her horror, the clock said that the hour was nearly one. One o'clock, and no lunch ready! Really, it was very inconsiderate of Martha to leave the meals so late. And Pen, what was she doing? She should have laid the table. and dusted, and done her little odd jobs about the house-it had been agreed that she was in future to do these things, in order to save Martha's legs, for Martha was getting very old, and indeed could hardly move about at all, it sometimes seemed to Mrs. Harvard, when she was waiting for something she wanted.

With a grieved expression upon her face,

Mrs. Harvard slowly made her way to the kitchen. Then she realised, to her horror, that things were even worse than she had feared. Martha was not there. Well! course, Martha had gone off to the village after washing up the breakfast things, and had caught the eleven o'clock bus to Mereminster. This was her day for visiting her daughter-in-law, about whose shortcomings Mrs. Harvard would hear to-morrow. there was no lunch. It had been Mrs. Harvard's duty to cook a lunch, and she had spent the morning in writing to the editors of the Daily Courier and the Anti-Humanitarian. Groaning, she sat down in the kitchen, feeling solitary and deserted.

"Moth-er!" called Hubert. "Here's the

post! There's a letter for you!"

Mrs. Harvard brightened. It was her greatest happiness to receive letters. But she was dashed again when she found that her only communication by the post was a circular. Far more interesting was a letter which had arrived for her husband. She turned it in her hand, examining the postmark and the handwriting, which she did not recognise, and speculating as to the sender of the letter. It was a small handwriting, neat and trim; the envelope was large and cheap, and bore the emblazoned name of the Golden Tiger Hotel in Mereminster. So it had come eight miles, from somebody unknown.

"Grub, Mother!" demanded Hubert.

"How about it?"

"Oh dear!" moaned Mrs. Harvard. "Where's Pen?"

There came at this moment a crash from the front gate, and a tall fair girl, the feminine counterpart of Hubert, and just as untidy as he, rushed up the garden path.

"Hullo, Mother! Where's lunch?" she gaily, but peremptorily, demanded. "I'm

famishing!''

"There's no lunch!" groaned Mrs. Harvard. "Oh dear, and here's Father!"

All three groaned. For while the first piece of news was tragic enough in itself, it was complicated and made far more horrible by the arrival of Father. Father would demand his meal, would give them no peace until he got it, and might then wander out of the house without remembering to eat what had been prepared.

Father—Mr. Harvard—was a tall man with a long and wavering beard. He wore a blue shirt and an orange tie. The blue shirt was to match his eyes, and the tie was to match his beard. A pleasant, simpleminded man, who was generally vague,

rarely quite solvent, always extremely goodnatured and cheerful. Those who knew them both were surprised that Mr. Harvard should have married Mrs. Harvard—not that they were not extraordinarily well-matched, but that nobody could ever imagine how two such happy-go-lucky people had been brought to the point of matrimony. Those who were surprised knew nothing of this romance, or of the events which had made Mrs. Harvard what she was. These things belong to another story. Meanwhile, Father was entering, a delightful look of anticipation upon his face.

"I remembered, my dear one," he said, smilingly, as he caught sight of Mrs. Harvard, "I remembered that you promised to give me a junket for lunch to-day. So, as the cows were approaching rather threateningly, I set work aside for the day. I wasn't in a good mood, either. I was seeing yellow everywhere, and that's always a bad

sign!"

"What!" moaned Mrs. Harvard. 'Junket—oh dear!"

Her eye was wandering about the room when it came in contact with the letter which she held in her hand. Hope darted to her face.

"This," she cried, "this has just come. Oh, I do hope it's a dealer who wants to buy

your pictures, Father!"

"Dealers who wish to do that are not to be found on every bush!" commented Mr. Harvard. But he took the letter, ruthlessly tore it open and scanned the first page. As he did this, his brows went up and his mouth—such of it as could be seen above the raw sienna beard—went down. He slowly turned the page, whistled, went through the pantomime of laughing silently, and looked at his watch, which had stopped.

"Well?" cried they all, breathlessly.

"What does it say?"

"Most curious!" muttered Mr. Harvard. Then, off-handedly, he said aloud: "Poor John is dead. Poor lad! Poor lad!"

"And has he——?" inquired Mrs. Harvard.

"Who's John?" demanded the two children.

"I once had a brother. His name was John. He was everything I wasn't," said Mr. Harvard succinctly. "Virtuous, determined to the verge of bossiness, and successful. He is dead. Our differences—such as they were—are finished. Poor lad! His only failure! This letter is from his daughter. She says her father is dead, and that

she is in need of advice and protection."

"From you?" gasped Hubert vulgarly. "Good lord!"

Strange as it may seem to you, Hubert." answered his father suavely, "from me. She seems to be quite near at hand. Perhaps I ought to go and see her. My dear, she's at the 'Golden Tiger,' at Mereminster. I'd better bring her here, don't you think?
Poor helpless orphan!"
"A girl?" asked Penelope. "How old?

How delicious!" She danced at the

thought of a new friend.

"I say, I'll run over on the old mo-bike!" offered Hubert, with equal eagerness. "Perhaps I'd be more helpful, Father. mean, a young feller—youth to youth, you know." He was grinning from ear to ear. Penelope thought she'd never seen anything so disgusting.

"Oh, no, for goodness' sake keep Hubert out of the way as long as possible!" she cried. "It'll be an awful job explaining him away, in any case. But if she saw him

first——"

"Sh!" interrupted Mrs. Harvard. "Yes, dear, you'd better go at once. You'll be able to catch the one-thirty bus, and while you're gone-

"Mother, you know perfectly well there's no bus until half-past two. And that it takes more than two hours to get a junket

eatable!" cried Pen.
"Sh!" Hope lurked in Mrs. Harvard's half-shrewd, half-wambling eye. "Your

father's forgotten."

There was a timid little knock at the front door, through which, as it stood open, they were all visible. But if they were visible, so was their visitor; and the whole family felt at the sight of this visitor something which was very subtly expressed by Hubert, who ejaculated one word.

"Golly!" said Hubert.

"Does Mr. Harvard live here, please?" said a prim little voice. And when Mr. Harvard went to the door, she added: "Uncle Ben? I'm Ruth. I thought I'd save you trouble, perhaps, by coming along in a taxi. He's down at the gate. Perhaps you'd—— How d'you do, Aunt Gertrude? Is this your daughter? How d'you do, Penelope? How d'you do, Hubert?" She gave each of them her hand in turn. She was very small, very pale, with a sweet smile that was also tragically shy, and was very beautifully dressed, in such a way that Penelope looked sharply down at her own old sack of a frock with horror and shame. "It's too bad to give you so much trouble; but I thought—I'm so much in need of wise help. I thought-"

"You thought Father would give it to you!" exclaimed Hubert in amazement. "But I mean—" He gave a short, hard laugh. "It's absurd!"

Ruth flashed a look at him.

"I'm sure he will." she answered. Hubert came to the conclusion that he was not going to like his cousin. He turned away. But he instantly looked at her again, because he felt that when one looked away the sun went behind a cloud. She certainly was pretty! And as charming as she was pretty; for she must have noticed that Hubert had been hurt by her rebuke, and threw out her hand towards him. "And so, I'm sure, will you. All of you. You all look so kind!"

"Lunch!" suddenly bellowed Mr. Har-"And Hubert, boy, just take your mo-bike into Mereminster and get a few bottles of wine. Tell old Satsh that I'll be coming in about his bill in a day or two. Tell him it's a credit to serve us. Tell him anything you like. But bring the wine."

The party broke up into frenzied, rushing individuals—except for Ruth, who seated herself upon a chair—the only one which was not covered with litter-and folded her hands, smiling quietly. She was beautifully calm, and she had the face of a little saint in an old Italian painting. Her dress was black; her hands were white and ringless; and her style was so good that she seemed to be a princess in this slack and untidy home.

II.

Hubert was in the garden. His back was bent; he was tugging ferociously at a luxuriant weed which had begun to choke the life-blood from a very skinny little columbine. He was rather red in the face, as the result of so much stooping; but his jaw was set and his eyes had an expression of gloomy determination which Penelope had never seen in them before. Penelope herself was unchanged—externally. She was wearing the same ugly sack-like frock of faded green which she had worn a week previously, upon the occasion of Ruth's arrival. And she stood watching Hubert with a rather dry smile upon her lips.

"Aren't you tired?" she demanded sud-

denly.

"No," answered Hubert. "What are you doing?" "Clearing away some of these beastly weeds. Garden's a muck-heap."

"That's nothing new."

"Well, I know it isn't. But it's going to be different," said Hubert grimly. "D'you know what they call this place in the village?"

"No. What do they call it?"

"They call it 'Ramshackle House.'"

"What sauce!" exclaimed Penelope, coming nearer. "Who told you that?"

"Never mind," retorted Hubert. "And d'you know what they call us?" He straightened himself. "They call us the 'Workhards.' Not the Harvards, but the 'Workhards.' See the point?"

Penelope was boiling.

"Who cares?" she cried hotly. "It's like their cheek! And you're weeding because a lot of stupid—— Oh, but I know what it really is! It's what Ruth said!"

Ruth had been domiciled with them for a week. At breakfast that morning, she had remarked that she had seen some columbines in the village that stood four feet tall, and as delicate and lovely as one could wish. She had asked if there were any columbines in the garden. Penelope's lip curled again.

"That's what it is, isn't it!" she exclaimed. "Why, you're as silly as a dog,

Hubie."

Hubert growled, and continued his task. His hands were covered with earth. Beside him the rank heap of weeds stood as high as the columbine.

"You'll never do it that way," teased Penelope. "And you won't make it any easier for the rest of us. Hubert, she's just a stupid. Does she paint? No. Does she write? No: she doesn't know how to put a dozen words together. Can she swim? No, because I asked her to go over to the river with me some morning and bathe, and she said she couldn't stand the water. Does she like mo-biking at sixty miles an hour? Does she?"

Hubert stooped lower.

"No," he growled. "It makes her sick," he admitted.

"Well, you like it. Why aren't you mo-biking now?"

"Rotten," answered Hubert. "Besides, I've sold the old mo-bike."

"Sold it!" screamed Pen. "Why, Hubert?"

He averted his eyes.

"I'm fed up with it. It's just what every other young fool's doing all the time. Just

a waste of energy. Besides, I'm going to get a job."

"'Fed up'?" scoffed Pen. "Oh, Hubert! D'you think Ruth would like you to say a thing like that?"

"You're only jealous," said Hubert in a rage. "Simply because your nose is out of joint. It's only because Tom Chatters and Dick are crazy about her——"

Penelope turned away. Her cheeks had flushed very warmly at this rude, and brotherly, speech. She walked right past Hubert, with her head in the air; and shut the gate after her with a noisy crash. A moment later she was in the lane which ran before the cottage, and was walking fast in the direction of the woods. Now that Hubert could no longer see her, she allowed her lips to tremble. A lump seemed to rise in her throat. She lowered her head, swinging her arm listlessly, and thinking deeply and miserably.

Still with her head low, although her lips no longer trembled, and although the flush had faded, leaving her cheeks quite pale, Pen turned aside into the little wood which she had always made her private playground. Here the lovely foliage of young larches swayed in the light breeze, and the soft grass caressed her feet. Sunlight flitted entrancingly upon her face, as if the day were smiling; and to a wounded heart the air was filled with a thousand messages of encouragement and sympathy. But Pen wandered on, unhappy, disregarding the cheerful song of the birds and the dappling of the shadows. A blow had been struck at her self-esteem, and she was deeply wounded. She could not hold her head high any longer. It was true that Ruth was a cause of infatuation in all the boys who had hitherto worshipped at Penelope's sisterly hands.

But a blow even greater was to fall. Deep in the wood, she became aware of another figure, as gloomy as her own, but of the opposite sex. For an instant she did not recognise that sadly bent form. When she did so a flush rose to her cheeks. She hesitated. And as she hesitated the figure was straightened. A young man—in the earliest twenties—glanced in Pen's direction with an air of such distracted misery that Penelope gave a cry of horror.

"Why, Malcolm!" she exclaimed, hastening forward. "Whatever's the matter, Malcolm?"

The boy made a movement as if to escape from her; and this wounded Penelope more deeply than ever, because Malcolm had



"For an instant she did not recognise that sadly bent form."

always been her especial friend—one with whom she could ramble all day long, and to whom she could open her mind as she could open it to nobody else. Her hand flew to her breast, where a sudden stabbing pain had rendered her breathless.

"Malcolm, dear!" she implored.

He stood before her like a hunted rabbit. His head was down, his face was pale, his lips were twitching. To her excited fancy there seemed to be foam upon them.

"I'm no good!" he almost shouted at her. "Let me go away. Let me alone." But he came towards her, and so close that Pen was able to take his hand sympathetically in both of her own. She was horrified at the change in his appearance, for there were great black rings round his eyes, and an unmistakable aspect of sleeplessness in the shadowed cheeks. At her touch, tears started to this boy's eyes. He gripped her hands so fiercely that Pen would have winced if she had not been so anxious about his condition. Choking, Malcolm again: "I'm no good, Pen. It's a horrible thing to discover. Horrible! I came in here to try and forget it. I thought-But I hadn't got the courage!" He moaned as he spoke.

"Courage! Courage for what?" cried Pen desperately. "Oh, Malcolm! What

were you going to do?"

"End it," he muttered. Then he broke down, still holding Pen's hands. His shoulders heaved. "Oh, Ruth, Ruth!" he said

Pen's heart jumped again. She felt ter-

ribly sick. Malcolm, too!

"But, Malcolm, dear!" she urged. "You

mustn't!"

"I know," he groaned. "I know I'm a fool to think she'd look at me. Fool that I am! Fool! When she's so lovely, pretty, so fragile—oh, Pen! I can't tell you how I've suffered! Every time I see her it's worse, and yet I come back and back, time after time, knowing it's no good. can't keep away, can't speak to her, can't do without her——" His voice cracked again. Then, abruptly, he gripped her hand and rushed away into the wood. In spite of Pen's anguished calls, he was instantly lost to sight and hearing. Pale and troubled. with a little ache at her heart, Pen stood for a while thinking of what Malcolm had said, thinking of what he meant. Somehow the sight of such misery had taken the sting out of her own anger. That seemed so paltry now, when this fine boy, so good and so

handsome, was in an agony of love and

Turning back towards the cottage, Pen walked soberly homeward. She was not feeling very happy, she decided. But that was because she was vaguely dissatisfied with life—and with herself. She was a little angry with Ruth. And yet how could one possibly be angry with Ruth? What had Ruth done, or said? Nothing! Indeed, her coming, though it had caused Pen to feel some occasional jealousies, had certainly cheered them all up. She did look pretty; but she didn't seem to think at all about that. She did not flirt with these boys, or even appear to notice them much, but just walked about and helped her aunt and old Martha, dusted the rooms and picked and arranged the flowers so that everybody was made happier by their loveliness in the vases. Martha was much better tempered nowadays, and whether it was Martha or Ruth who cooked the meals, they were unquestionably much nicer and more eatable than usual. And yet—— And yet Penelope was not happy. She wondered why it was.

She was still wondering, when she heard a light step behind her, glanced back, and beheld the person about whom she had been thinking. Ruth, still dressed very simply in

black, was quite near.

"Hullo, Penelope!" she said, not brightly, but kindly. She was carrying a parcel wrapped in brown paper. "I've been to Mereminster."

"What ever for?" asked Pen.

Ruth, demure as ever, and showing no sign at all of the heat of the day, smiled.

"Three guesses," she said quietly.

Pen looked long upon the brown-paper parcel.

"Well, you see, it's hardly fair," said she. "But I happen to know that the only shop in Mereminster that uses that particular brown paper is the Bon Marché.'

"That doesn't count as a guess," answered

Ruth. "You've still got three!"

"Nighties," guessed Pen, flushing.

"No. Nothing 'made.'"
"What, material?" Pen was at once "You're going to make someinterested. thing ? "

"You see, I once had a dressmaking burse," Ruth told her. "I'm fond of course," Ruth told her. sewing. D'you like it?"

"Hate it," Pen said abruptly.

"I thought perhaps you did," answered Ruth. "So-"

Pen, quite scarlet, looked down at her shabby green dress, which was much out of shape, and looked more like a sack than a dress.

"You could see, I expect," she cried. It was like a cry of pain. "Oh, I know you must despise us all—me in particular—"

"I didn't mean anything of the kind," answered Ruth frankly. "But it's true that I thought—— Auntie told me yesterday that it was your birthday next week——" She looked pleasantly down at the brown-paper parcel.

"Oh, Ruth! For me!" gasped Pen.
"Oh, how decent of you! I say, let me

carry it!"

"No, I like to carry it for myself. But when we get in——"

"What colour?" begged Pen.

"Oh, black," responded Ruth. "Of course. For Father, you see."

Pen's face fell. She glanced aside at the

determined little face beside her.

"Oh, thanks," she said, rather more dryly.
"I hope you haven't felt—— You see,
Father and Mother have always thought
mourning——"

"I quite agree. This is for the evenings," interrupted Ruth. "I've got some

nice blue for the daytime."

Enraptured, Pen gave a whoop. Then Ruth tore a little hole in the corner of the brown paper and allowed Pen to glimpse the blue. It was exquisite! The rest of the journey home was made by Pen in such a series of long strides that she seemed to be walking on air. Ruth's final words raised her to ecstasy.

"You see, black will suit your fairness. And so will blue. Better than green. With your lovely hair. You'll look wonderful. You're owfully pretty, you know".

You're awfully pretty, you know."
"Oh, Ruth!" murmured Pen. "B

you're simply an angel!"

Ruth only smiled her prim, determined

little smile.

"Not quite that," she answered. Then, almost reguishly, she added: "Very nearly, of course."

III.

Mr. Harvard sat looking disconsolately at the scene before him.

"I've painted that old mill a dozen times," said he aloud. "And I'm sick of it!" The sound of his own voice was quite startling to him in the surrounding silence. "Sick of it!" he repeated. His hand was brushed through his raw sienna beard.

"Uncle," said a voice behind him, "can I interrupt?"

"My dear Ruth!" Mr. Harvard sprang

up. "You never interrupt!"

"Well, I think I've found a new scene for you to paint. I found it quite by accident. It's a beautiful scene—just a glade in the wood——"

"With yourself in it?"

"No," she laughed. "But myself near, sewing, so that you can talk to me if you want to."

"Splendid! Now I wonder why it is that if Pen offered to sit near me I should scream, while when you—— However, I shan't forget the other day, when I really got on very well——" He was smiling jovially and stroking his beard. "I did get on well, didn't I?"

"It seemed to me to be wonderful. And you remember that it was I who took you to that scene!" She was not boasting or talking priggishly, but was archly coaxing. "You know, I feel sure that what has been the matter with you is that you've felt rather stale, and have just gone on doing the old things because you hadn't the energy to find fresh scenes—""

"Fresh woods and pastures new, hey?" replied her uncle. He was gathering his easel together. "You see how instantly I obey your call. You're right about me. I was in a groove. You showed me the way out. Clever little girl. Now, take me to this glade of yours; and if it does the trick, why—— You know that money hasn't been too plentiful with us, child. It's not plentiful now. But there it is,"—he shrugged his shoulders and puffed out his chest—"an artist can't be driven by necessity. Only by the impulse of art——"

"Yes, Uncle," said Ruth obediently.

Mr. Harvard was pleased by her docility.

"What a grand little wife you'll make for

"What a grand little wife you'll make for somebody!" he cried. "One of these days!"

He thought Ruth changed colour. "Yes, Uncle," she said quietly.

"Don't care much for the boys, do you?" he asked, with that genial teasing which he had hitherto reserved for his own children.

Ruth did not answer for a moment.

"No," she said, in a strange tone.

"Now, where's this scene you promised me? What? Along this path? But I've been along here thousands of times——"

They were in the wood, under the larches,

and the sun was speckling the ground about them, and the breeze was playing idly among the leaves. But Ruth did not stay. She led him farther into the wood, to a spot where, unexpectedly, there came the loveliest glade Mr. Harvard had ever seen. He did not speak. He looked. And with hands that only seemed to tremble, he immediately unfolded his easel. His head was thrown back, his eyes were half closed. He moved about the open space, seeking a better view-point; and at last he came back to where Ruth had all the time continued to stand.

"You're an artist," he said abruptly.

"Ever paint?"

"I took a course in painting," Ruth said.
"I can't paint. I only care for choosing the subjects."

"H'm!" grunted Mr. Harvard. "Then I hope nobody will ever take you away from

us."

He was not looking at Ruth as he spoke; and he therefore did not see the expression which crossed her face at his remark. He forgot her presence. He was absorbed in his work, and for an hour did not move. At the end of an hour he began to ejaculate to himself. Then he jumped up, and stood back from his rough preparation for the painting, making the quick comparisons of the artist. Apparently the result of his comparisons was satisfactory, for he gave a big sigh, and said abruptly to Ruth:

"When you first wrote, you said you wanted my help and advice about some-

thing."

"Did I, Uncle?" asked Ruth demurely.

"Can I give it?"

She was silent for a moment. At last she said:

"You have given it, Uncle. Without

knowing."

"Marvellous!" muttered her uncle, who had already forgotten the question he had asked her. His eyes were again narrowed. He surveyed the scene before him, and then looked at his canvas. "I wonder if they'll like that water-colour I did of you?" he continued, half to himself. "That was all right, you know."

"In the garden, yes. It was very good."

"Something's happened to that garden, you know."

"Hubert has been looking after it."

"H'm!" grunted Mr. Harvard. "Used to be careering about on his motor-cycle all the time. Something else you've done. I tell you what, Ruth, if you'll stay with us for the rest of your life——"

A heavy sigh from Ruth made him look at

her sharply.

"That was something I wanted to say to you, Uncle——" she began, agitatedly. "I'm afraid——" And then she stopped. Mr. Harvard was puzzled to see her so moved. He hated emotion in others. He was afraid it might involve some discomfort for himself.

"There, there," he said, putting out his hand towards her. "Don't worry, my dear. There's a home with us as long as you feel any need for it: Come and look at my work. Tell me if you think I'm on the

right track."

This was a compliment indeed! To nobody else had Mr. Harvard ever extended such an invitation. They moved towards the roughly splashed canvas, before which Mr. Harvard squinted and grimaced in an extraordinary manner. Seizing his palette and brushes once again, he seated himself before the canvas, and for another hour he worked in silence.

The morning passed. Nothing more was said between the two, but at a quarter to one Ruth glanced at her little gold wristwatch, and rose. She was always punctual.

"Hey?" inquired her uncle. "Oh, lunch! Well, I'll leave it. I didn't want to. But you're right about these meals. One does work the better for being refreshed. Come along, then." He stood up. "Yes, by Jove, you were right about that ultramarine. Absolutely right. D'you see?" He patted her upon the shoulder. "Clever little kid, Ruth," he growled. "You'll make a painter of me in time. What?"

They were walking slowly up through the garden, and past the neatly hoed border. Penelope, in her new blue dress, was shaking a few bread-crumbs out of a window for the birds; while Hubert, washed and trimly barbered, lounged within the porch. But although he lounged he looked alert, as he had not hitherto done. A flabbiness had disappeared from his cheeks; his blue eyes were bright. And as Ruth appeared in the garden a slow colour crept into his face, and spread to the roots of his hair.

"A letter for you, Father!" called Mrs. Harvard, from the window of the sitting-room. "I think it's a nice one!"

Grinning vaguely, Mr. Harvard set down his canvas and his other impedimenta. The letter was handed to him, and he tore open the envelope. As he read the typed words



"He gave a big sigh, and said abruptly to Ruth: 'When you first wrote, you said you wanted my help and advice about something.'"

upon the sheet of paper within, his whole face lighted up.

"DEAR Mr. HARVARD," said the writer of the letter.—

"Many thanks for the three water-colours safely to hand. These are all excellent. In fact, marvellous. I am glad to say that I have been able to These are all excellent. In fact, marsell all three, while I can offer you a commission for half a dozen more, at the rate of fifty pounds apiece. The purchaser of one of the water-colours is most enthusiastic; and I think I shall be able to sell him a fairly big oil-painting at a really satisfactory rate. Can you let me have something Al? By the way, the purchaser of the figure subject—a young woman in a garden—was most anxious to get into touch with you personally. I requested him to deal entirely with myself, knowing your dislike of personal dealings with customers; but I may have some difficulty with him, as he is most importunate. I enclose my cheque for £135, and expect to be able to send you a cheque for a larger amount when I next write. Will you allow me to say what pleasure I have found in the three most attractive watercolours which you sent? This new vein of yours is perfectly charming.

"Yours sincerely,
"J. BODENHEIM."

"H'm!" grunted Mr. Harvard, turning to Ruth. "And half of this properly belongs to you, my girl. And it seems that the person who bought the sketch of yourself is trying to get into touch with me——! Another conquest, apparently!"

There was an expression of something like apprehensiveness upon Ruth's pale little face as she received this piece of news from her uncle. She took the letter from his hand and read the words for herself. It was at this moment that Martha introduced lunch. In the excitement of the moment Mr. Bodenheim's cheque had fluttered to the floor, and as Martha stooped to pick it up her eyes nearly started out of her head.

IV.

"DEAR SIR," wrote Mrs. Harvard,-

"I notice in your to-day's issue that an Anonymous Writer makes a PARTICULARLY Stupid attack upon the work Which is Being Done by the Society for the Extension of Protection to ALL Sentient Things. He says that the Promoters of the Society have NO other purpose than the increase of Their Own Importance. Sir, this is a CALUMNY..."

Mrs. Harvard had been compelled to desist from her letter at this point, for she was so overcome with indignation that she felt burning all over. She stared about the room in an effort to recover composure, and for the first time in her life she noticed how very untidy she had made the chairs by throwing papers upon them in a wild heap.

"Really!" she exclaimed, with self-

reproach. "I'm getting terribly untidy again! What Ruth will think! I'm ashamed of myself!"

Stooping, she began to tidy the nearest chair. It bore a number of periodicals and circulars, all of which had reached, Mrs. Harvard either yesterday or this morning, and all of which were of little use. Gathering the papers up into an armful, Mrs. Harvard stumbled to the door, nearly tripping over her dressing-gown as she went.

"This dressing-gown, too!" she vaguely thought. "I thought I'd put it away for ever. Oh dear! It's torn! And Ruth has made me such a pretty little jacket—How silly of me not to wear it! I'll go upstairs and get it this moment!"

From her bedroom window, while she arrayed herself in the perfectly exquisite little jacket which Ruth had just given her, Mrs. Harvard caught sight of a movement at the front gate. She peered out of the window, shortsightedly, thinking it might be the children, returned from the walk upon which they were engaged. After all, they were just due back for tea, for which Ruth was making some tiny Devonshire splits in the kitchen. Ruth, it appeared, had taken a course in cookery, and she had made tea, with cakes, a feature of the cottage afternoons ever since her arrival, three weeks before.

But the figure which entered by the front gate was not that of one of Mrs. Harvard's children. It was that of a stranger to Mrs. Harvard, a young man of perhaps twenty-eight or twenty-nine, very tall and bronzed, broad-shouldered and good-looking, with a thin dark face and keen black eyes which looked all about him as he walked up the path.

"Well!" ruminated Mrs. Harvard. "I wonder who this can be! He looks a gentleman; and yet—we're not expecting a visitor——I wonder who he can be!"

She interestedly watched the young man's progress up the path, but she did not make any attempt to descend to the door in order to encounter him. Such an action would have been foreign to her nature, which was entirely without serious curiosity concerning anything whatever, and desired only rest and comfort at all times. She might have stayed at the window, wondering, all the afternoon, just as she would turn an envelope over and over, speculating about the sender, instead of opening the envelope as the shortest way of discovering his identity. But at this moment Ruth came running—in

complete silence—into the room. She was deeply agitated. Her cheeks were flaming, and her hands were trembling. Mrs. Harvard could tell that they were trembling because the flour which still clung to the fingers was showering upon the floor. Ruth put a finger to her lips, while Mrs. Harvard, vaguely alarmed, started towards her.

"My dear, what is—" cried Mrs. Har-

vard.

"Hush, Auntie! Whisper! There's a man at the door. I saw him from the kitchen window——"

"Is he a horrid man? I'll send him

away!" whispered Mrs. Harvard.

"N-n-no," stammered Ruth. "Not horrid. But he wants to see me. I can't see him. I can't bear to see him. I-I must—— I'm all confused. I didn't expect— Will you— I don't know what you're to say. But send him away. For I can't see him; I can't see him!" She ran wildly towards her own bedroom; and Mrs. Harvard heard the old heavy key turned in the lock as the door was softly closed. Sighing, and with indignation rising in her breast at the thought that Ruth was being pursued and badgered by this man-against whom she instantly conceived great anger, Mrs. Harvard (still in the lovely new jacket which Ruth had made for her) slowly descended the steep flight of stairs. The young man was standing within the porch, for the front door was wide open. And at Mrs. Harvard's approach he removed his hat, holding it respectfully in his hand. She saw that he had a pair of very keen dark eyes, and a firm mouth, and strong black hair, and a lean brown face—and a very charming smile, against which, in other circumstances, Mrs. Harvard would not have been proof. Indeed, he seemed to be a most attractive young man. But Mrs. Harvard brushed aside her inclination to smile in response to his smile. She advanced sternly upon him.

"And You, Sir," she said, inadvertently continuing her letter upon the subject of the Society for the Extension of Protection to All Sentient Things, "and You, Sir, should be aware that the act of Cruelty is abhorrent to All Right Thinking Persons. What Right have We, Sir, to Inflict Pain, even upon the Meadow Grass, even upon the Vegetables? May I beg the Hospitality of

The young man started at this beginning. It seemed to Mrs. Harvard that under his bronze he was rather pale, as if he were

Your Columns—

labouring under strong excitement; but as she paused for breath he bowed, smiled, and coolly responded:

"Mrs. Harvard? My name is John Summers. You've probably heard of me."

"Indeed I have not!" cried Mrs. Harvard

"Not from Ruth? Surely—!" He drew back a step. "It is really Ruth I want to see. Could I see her? I'm sure you'll help me when you know—"

"You can't see Ruth!" said Mrs. Harvard sternly. "I shall not help you. Poor child, she is far too unwell to see you. Far

too unwell."

"Really unwell?" exclaimed the young man. "Oh dear! But I think in that case I must see her. I mean, this is a very serious thing, you know. Perhaps you don't realise how serious it is? I'm sure you don't. By the way, is there another way out of the cottage? I see there is." His tongue clucked against the roof of his mouth. "Ah! Excuse me. Excuse me, will you —— Please forgive me, but in dealing with Ruth——"

He broke off. Apparently he had seen something which Mrs. Harvard could not see; for within the porch there was a small window, from which could be commanded a narrow path leading through the vegetable beds and out through a copse into the lane in which the cottage stood. To Mrs. Harvard's astonishment, the young man suddenly darted from her side, across the garden, down the path between the cabbages and the green peas, and disappeared from view.

Panting, she ran out into the garden herself, and watched his rapid progress with indignation. Her hands flew into the air in horror. She screamed—a faint, old scream which did not reach more than a dozen yards away. Tottering, frightened, angry, she went indoors again, and up the stairs to Ruth's room. The door of the room was closed, but the key was no longer turned, and the room was empty. Ruth had fled. The young man was after her. What would happen? Screaming again, Mrs. Harvard ran down the stairs, and to the porch. If only her husband were here! And the children!

As if she had prayed, and as if her prayer had been answered, the front gate flew suddenly open, and all three members of her family came trooping cheerfully home, expectant of tea and Devonshire splits, which of all the cakes that Ruth made were their favourites.

"Father!" wailed Mrs. Harvard.
"Pen! Hubert!"

Whimpering, stammering, and exclaiming, Mrs. Harvard told them what had happened.

"Well, obviously they can't be in the direction we've come from!" cried Pen. "They must be this way. Through here. Through my little wood!" She ran on,



Horrified exclamations broke from all three. And before she had reached the end of the story the two younger ones were skirting the cottage at a run, followed closely, but more cumbrously, by their father. Mrs. Harvard panted in the rear.

Down the rough path between the green peas and the cabbages trotted the procession, and out into the copse. Nobody was to be seen here. In the lane there was nobody. They stood looking to right and left. The lane was empty.

only to be overtaken by Hubert, who seemed to be positively frantic at this contretemps. The little wood closed over their heads. The soft grass deadened every footfall. The light and supple larches swayed over their heads, as if they were singing a lullaby. And there, under the larches, the pursuers found those whom they sought so eagerly.

Hubert, leading, uttered a violent groan, and stopped dead. Pen, close upon his heels, stumbled against him, saw what Hubert had seen, and gave a squeal. Mr. Harvard,

thudding along in the rear, was up to his children almost as soon as they had collided; while even Mrs. Harvard was not long shock, but to each it presented itself in a different light. For there before them, in the larch wood, with the sun playing upon



"To all four, the sight that met their gaze was the most inexplicable they had ever beheld."

behind. To all four, the sight that met their gaze was the most inexplicable they had ever beheld. To each one of them it came as a

their faces, were Ruth and her pursuer. And Ruth was crying in the stranger's arms, while the stranger kissed her as if he would never stop, and while Ruth, her little arms about the stranger's neck, pressed ever closer, as if in passionate surrender.

While the Harvards, rather sheepishly, began to turn away, and to feel that they had been too precipitate in running after these young people, John Summers caught sight of the four odd figures under the trees. He whispered something to Ruth, who kissed him again, withdrew her arms from his shoulders, and turned to her uncle and aunt and cousins. She was smiling. It was the strangest sight to see that she smiled even while the tears continued to course down her cheeks. To Hubert the sight was so dreadful that he uttered an oath, and stood white and trembling while Ruth led the stranger towards the dishevelled group.

She could not speak. Whenever she tried to do so, she broke down, until at last, merely indicating the stranger with one proud hand, she stammered: "This is John." stranger, who had lost his hat in the chase, bowed to them all, while Ruth held his hand very tightly in both of her own. John seemed to be the least moved of them all, but Mrs. Harvard saw with relief that he was no longer pale under the tan, but was flushed.

His eyes sparkled. He smiled.

"I'm so sorry," he was saying as the two joined the others. "I'm afraid I've brought about a horrible upset. Do, please, forgive me. And forgive Ruth, who, of course, is the real cause of the trouble!"

"I'm awful!" admitted Ruth, loosening a hand in order to wipe away with her handkerchief some of the tears which trembled

upon her cheeks.

"Ruth, as you know," continued John, still smiling, "is very strong-willed, very stubborn. And in fact an idiot."

"I'm sure she's not!" cried Mrs. Harvard indignantly. "On the contrary!"

John looked at the other unconvinced faces before, still smiling in the dappled shadows of the larches, he resumed:

"And we had a terrific row over something quite trivial. She ran away. Let explain-"

"No, no, John," interrupted Ruth "You were quite right. I see you eagerly. were quite right. Absolutely right."

John's head gave the smallest jerk. He

said, gently enough:

"Well, I was, dear. But I wasn't proposing to insist.'

"You were!"

"I wasn't!"

"You were!"

"Don't be a complete ass, Ruth!"

"Oh! It's intolerable!" Ruth turned away, drawing her hands from his, and standing absolutely by herself. John, still cool, and in no way moved by this display. addressed himself to Ruth's aunt.

"Now, Mrs. Harvard, I appeal to you. When two people of strong will disagree, one of them has to give way. You agree, don't you?" He was so coaxing that Mrs. Harvard could not help being slightly impressed. But a glance at the simple little face of Ruth destroyed all the effect of John's appeal.

"Ruth's opinion," said Mrs. Harvard, "I'm sure, is the one to follow. So wise, so

kind, so gentle-"

Here a most extraordinary event occurred. The stranger—John—glanced aside at Ruth and winked. It was not a vulgar wink, but a subtle one. And yet it was plain to the whole Harvard family that John had winked at Ruth. And that Ruth had smiled at the wink.

John resumed:

"Mrs. Harvard, the whole row-

"John!" cried Ruth urgently. "You're

Her protest was ignored. John continued:

"When a wife-"

He could proceed no further. With one accord the Harvards gave a shout of astonishment and incredulity.

"Wha-at!" they exclaimed. And Pen added accusingly: "You're married?" Hubert, white as a sheet, butted his head savagely against a larch tree, groaning aloud. Then he threw himself upon the ground, his head upon his folded arms.

So obvious was the universal dismay that

John turned suddenly upon his wife.

"Do you mean to tell me, Ruth began. Then, at her downcast head, he "Oh, I'm ashamed of shook his own. you!" he cried. "Ashamed! No wonder these good people thought I was a scallywag! It wasn't fair of you, my darling! It really wasn't!" But as Ruth went towards him with outstretched hands he drew her once again to his breast. The smile of high spirits returned to his face. To Mrs. Harvard he added: "Of course we're married. We've been married for several months. several months. In fact the whole trouble

[&]quot;John!" protested Ruth.
"Well?" He checked himself.

[&]quot;You're not to!"

[&]quot;I'm jolly well going to!" declared John.

He resumed: "In fact the whole trouble arose over the colour of the nursery wallpaper—" continued John, "Because I said that my child wasn't to be blinded by the colours Ruth favours; and Ruth said that her child wasn't going to grow up a dingy-minded dullard—those were her very words---"

Ruth moaned.

"You're right, dear," she said. "You're always right.

"What a hateful person!" exclaimed Mrs.

Harvard. "Always right!"

"He's not hateful!" cried Ruth vehemently. "He's the best and kindest man in the world. And I don't deserve him. But he's so strong-willed. I can't manage him! But his child shall be as dull as he likes, and dingy-witted-"

"I thought you'd like to know that the finished," interrupted nursery's "The top half of it is brilliant, where she'll look as she grows up; the other half is sober, where she'll look while her old eyes are

weak. It's all splendid!"

"Oh, I do hope he'll like it!" sighed Ruth, forgetting for an instant that they were not alone. "How I long to see it! I feel I must go now. But how can I possibly leave these lovely kind people, who spoil me so! There! I've left the oven alight, and haven't put the cakes in! We must hurry back. Come along, Auntie and Uncle and Pen. Come along, Hubert dear! We'll have our tea. And John shall help. He's splendid in the house. He's altogether splendid. You'll all love him!"

The only answer was a groan from Hubert; but Ruth, not hearing the groan, took her aunt's arm, and then Pen's arm, so that the three of them walked abreast through the little larch wood; while Mr. Harvard and John, and after them Hubert, dragging his feet wearily over the grass, followed behind.

"Wonderful child!" gruffly remarked Mr. Harvard, indicating Ruth to her husband.

"Yes," agreed John. "Marvellous."

"She's transformed our household since she arrived. Everything's different."

"She'd transform anything. Except me. Even me, if I didn't fight. She knows she can't beat me. That's why she married me, you know."

It was smilingly said; but Mr. Harvard thought he caught a little glint in John's eye as he spoke. Something caused him to take John's elbow in his hand.

"I say, I like you," he said. "Interested

in pictures?"

"I bought one of yours this week," answered John. "That's how I knew where Ruth was. It was a picture of Ruth in your

garden."

"By Jove, d'you mean you recognised her?" exclaimed Mr. Harvard, with modest awe. "That was smart of you!" It made him thoughtful. At last he added: "And that shows something else, doesn't it? It shows you're pretty fond of her, I mean."

"Fond?" muttered John. "Fond? I worship her. If I didn't look out I should be her slave. But I tell you I have to fight tooth and nail to keep my independ-

ence."

Ruth, as if she had heard his words, glanced back. And her glance was so adoring, so very much more radiant than anything they had ever noticed at Honeysuckle Cottage, that Ruth's uncle made another discovery. It was that the love between these two young obstinates was not all upon one side. And that the fear of giving-in was common to both. He smiled quietly to himself, imagining the future.

"In the end," he said gently, "she'll get her own way."

John put a finger to his lips. "Sh!" he begged. "I know!"

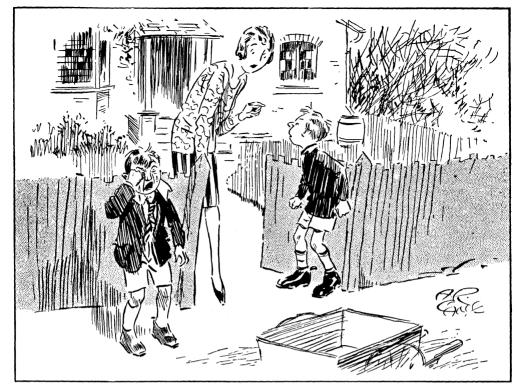
I ASK THIS.

ET life cover me, Bury me Deep. I shall have dreams then For the long sleep.

And then at the last Let there A sweet place in the earth

. . . Silent . . . tranquil . . . With only The sound Of rain Yearning into the ground.

CHARLOTTE ARTHUR.



CASUS BELLI.

MOTHER: Why are you always hitting the boy next door?

Son: Because he won't be friends!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

FELICITY VOTES.

By Eric D. Brand.

The Home Secretary recently affirmed his belief that the young woman of twenty-one is to-day as sensible as most women were at double the age twenty years ago. He may be right, but after my experience with Felicity I am inclined to doubt it. Felicity is my niece, and some three months ago I attended the celebrations in honour of her twenty-first birthday.

"And now that you are entitled to a vote," I said, "I suppose you will be a staunch Conservative."

"Oh, no," said Felicity, "I'm not going to

be a Conservative at all."
"Indeed?" I said, with some asperity.
"And why not?"

"Because I am going to be a Liberal."

"What on earth for?" I exclaimed. "The Liberals haven't a chance of forming a Government—there is only a mere handful of them in the House."

"That's just it," said Felicity calmly. "I don't think it's fair they should be so horribly

outnumbered, so I am going to try and help them."

"But, my dear girl," I began, and I proceeded to try and explain to her that every vote for Liberalism was equivalent to two votes against Conservatism and any chance of national prosperity. But Felicity was stubborn.

"Î am afraid, Uncle, you have lost the sporting

spirit."

"But—" I spluttered.

"Besides," said Felicity crushingly, "a girl must be allowed to think for herself."

I tried to reason further with her, but when she said that if I got any redder in the face I should probably burst, I gave it up.

I did not see Felicity again for some time. When I did it so happened that a by-election was pending in her constituency, caused by the ill health and retirement of the sitting Member

"Well," I said jocularly, "and is the Liberal banner still nailed to your shingled head?"

Felicity blushed a little. "N-no, Uncle, not exactly."



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"What do you mean, not exactly?"

"Well, to be perfectly frank, I'm a Social-

I breathed heavily. "Indeed? And who converted you to Socialism?"

"A man friend," said Felicity.
"Oh, a man," I grunted; "and I'll bet he was a young man.'

"He is quite young," said Felicity cautiously, "but he is wonderfully clever. Some day he is going to be an M.P. himself."

Ha!" I said. "And what sort of work does

this budding Prime Minister do?"

"Oh, he doesn't have to work," said Felicity. "His mother left him six hundred a year, so "Then for whom did you

"At first," said Felicity, "I put a cross against the Liberal; but then—well, I remembered that I sort of knew the Conservative-I mean, I had met him once—so I crossed out my first cross and put another against his name.'

I shouted: "But, good gracious, girl, that paper was spoiled-useless-you should have

asked for another one!"

Felicity frowned impatiently. "Oh, well," she said, "it doesn't matter much who gets in-I never see any difference between them. And, anyway, the whole thing is awfully silly and childish.



THE PERFECT VALET.

"Half a moment, sir, I can't let you go out like that. I think you must have a sixpence or something in your hip pocket.'

he is quite free to devote his energies to the Cause.

On hearing that I washed my hands of Felicity: there seemed no hope for her-or the country-

But some three weeks later, on the polling day, I happened to meet her returning from the booth.

"So you've voted," I said, "and for your

precious Socialists, I presume?"

"I did nothing of the kind," said Felicity "I realise that Socialists are impossible people. A man who can invite one to a dance and then, at the last moment, go to a wretched political meeting, is not the sort of man whose views I can share."

VISITOR: You ought to have a notice-board here warning people about this dangerous preci-

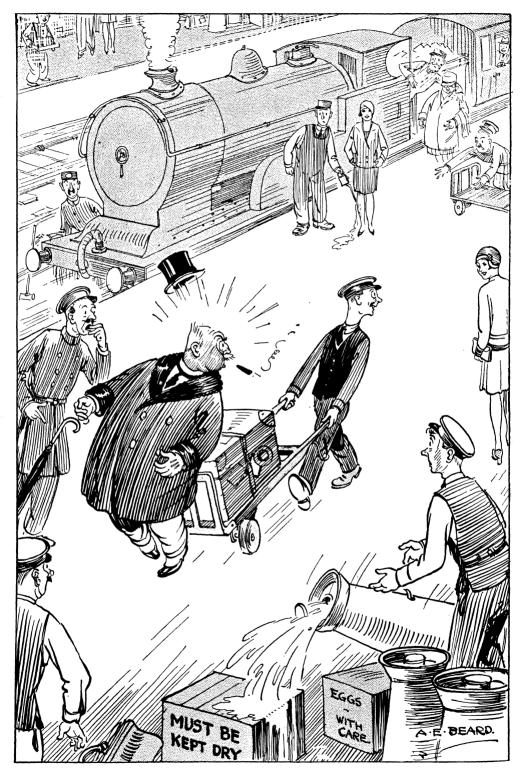
NATIVE: Us put a board there once, but nobody fell over, so us took it away again.

COMPLAINING TENANT: The house is very damp too.

LANDLORD: Yes, that's because there's so much due on it.

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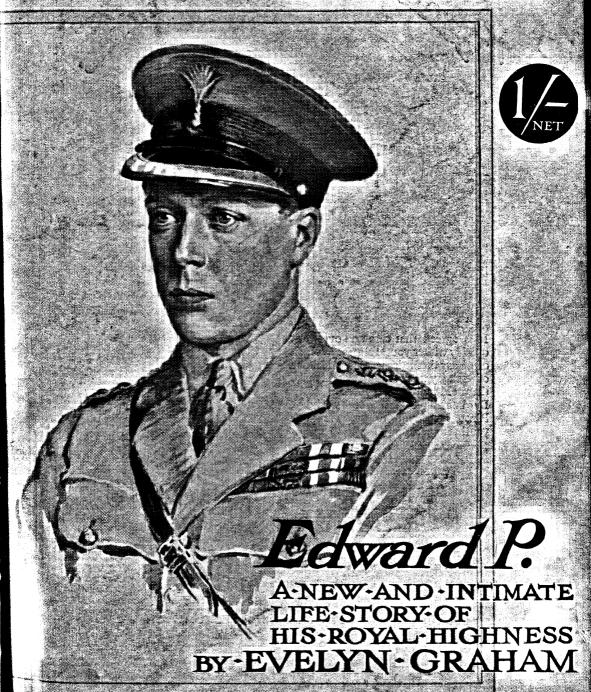
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THE WEED.

PREDOMINANT PARTNER: Now don't come in till you've sprayed round all the roses—and see you don't spill any weed-killer on yourself.

THE JULY: JUL26 1920 MAGAZINE





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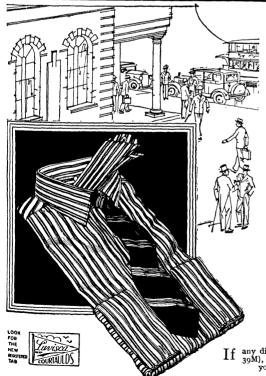
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THE STORY OF H.R.H.the PRINCE OF WALES

AN AUTHORITATIVE LIFE BASED ON MATERIAL OBTAINED FROM INTIMATE SOURCES

EVELYN GRAHAM

Biographer of H.R.H. The Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, H.M. The Queen of Spain, etc.

Continued from last month's issue.

IV.

OSBORNE, DARTMOUTH AND THE PUBLIC EYE.

SBORNE HOUSE, situated upon a gentle eminence sloping to the sea some three miles south-east of Cowes, was the scene of the Prince's first contact with his contemporaries among less exalted mortals. The house itself was possessed of some tradition for his family. though David was probably too young to realise it. It had been purchased by Queen Victoria for a Royal estate and had been her favourite residence in her declining years. It was there, in fact, that she died, surrounded by the three later generations of her family; and shortly after her death King Edward presented the house and grounds to the nation to become a convalescent home and training college for the Navy.

After the War, when economy ruled that Osborne was an unnecessary extravagance for the Senior Service, the training college was discontinued, and Osborne House remains simply as one of the most imposing

and picturesque buildings in the Isle of Wight.

At the time of the Prince's sojourn there, however, it fulfilled a different rôle, combining the junior forms of a public school with the functions of a training-ship, and was inhabited by a race of boys whose primary ambition was to appear in the uniform of midshipmen of His Majesty's Navy. This ambition played so large a part in the lives of its inmates that Osborne was probably one of the best places in the world for making a little prince into a little man.

David was thirteen years old when he was rudely pitched into this environment. The change in circumstances was doubtless lightened by the fact that his firm friend and tutor, Mr. Hansell, was still by his side. Even so, the change must have been startling. At home, the Prince had been surrounded only by his family, who had been taught much in the same manner as himself, but had always realised the respect due to a brother who would eventually be King.

At Osborne, on the other hand, the world was made up of small boys of about the age

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of fourteen, who although naturally not devoid of snobbery, were apt in the heat of the moment to forget it, or to invert it in a conscious determination to show they considered themselves capable of putting a future king in his proper place as a naval This unconscious spirit of inverted snobbery, which is unavoidable in an Englishman wishing to conceal his gratified embarrassment, led the authorities of the College to call the young Prince "Edward of Wales," or more briefly "E. of W." for official purposes, such as the marking of linen! An ingenious device which deceived no one, but was interpreted as in accordance with his father's desire that David should be treated just as an ordinary cadet.

His companions, much in the same spirit, but more succinctly and humorously, knew him as "Sardine"—a tribute to his small size. (This nickname has stuck to the Prince through life and is still often used by his brothers in the intimate home circle of the Royal Family.) It was, of course, a point of honour among H.R.H.'s fellow cadets that they should make no difference between this new-comer of royal blood and any other boy—a point of honour which probably led them to the opposite extreme of giving him a rather rougher time than he would otherwise have had.

In this new life he was initiated into the habits of public-school boys. He slept in the dormitories with the others, and took his part in those amusements which go on after lights out, and of which he was at times the exalted victim. At six-thirty every morning he was turned out with his fellows and forced to enter for his morning swim. With the others he learnt the elements of gunnery, discipline and naval tactics, without omitting such general education as is considered necessary in a naval officer, and with the others he took his part in the scramble for those rations which were a welcome feature of the day. But all the time his education as a naval officer was proceeding his lessons in princeship were not neglected.

Once a week a lengthy letter from his father would arrive, containing, apart from the usual parental exhortations to industry, advice upon the proper conduct of a Prince of Wales among his almost-fellow men; and every day there was the ubiquitous Mr. Hansell to see that he did not forget either his dignity, which was relatively unimportant, or the eyes of the world, which most decidedly were not. Besides this, as has been

remarked before, his companions were ever on the look-out for signs of "side," which they considered were as inevitable as they were to be deprecated in the young Prince. And the boys were fairly liberal in their interpretation as to what was "side." An unfortunate reference to "my grandfather the King" elicited a rebuke from a watchful cadet which led to the problem as to what David might or might not be allowed to say being settled by a stand-up fight in the dormitory at night. On an occasion when King Edward paid a surprise visit to Osborne to see the Prince, he was somewhat amused to see "Sardine" with a black eye. "How did you get that?" asked His Majesty.

"Oh," replied Prince Edward, "one of the chaps 'Royal Highnessed' me and I had to teach him better manners!"

After two years at Osborne, where the Prince in spite of his handicaps succeeded in making several friends, whom he chose for their modest outlook upon life, he was passed out as "Cadet Edward of Wales" and proceeded to the completion of his naval education at Dartmouth College.

This was in 1909, when he was fifteen years of age, as were his new fellow cadets at Dartmouth. At this age, however, the hereditary training and instincts of Englishmen have done their work, and if a boy of fifteen is not yet sufficiently advanced "dearly to love a lord," he is at least capable of appreciating that the Prince of Wales is a being to whom respect is due irrespective of his other qualifications. this, of course, it is not meant that Prince Edward (whom we can no longer familiarly consider as David) was deficient in the normal, not unpleasant, qualities of an English gentleman, but even at Dartmouth these were becoming subsidiary to his traditional glamour as a British Prince. Naturally, therefore, he soon became a prominent and popular member of his new College and took a conspicuous part in many of its activities. It was while here that he served his initiation into the delight of sport that is so deeply ingrained in his The beagles of the Royal Naval College claimed his patronage, and before he left he was promoted to the onerous position of "whipper in."

His other sports at Dartmouth were catholic in their scope but less distinguished in their execution. He played "soccer" with mild enthusiasm, much speed and little skill.

There were occasions during his time at

Dartmouth on which the Prince was still kept before the public eye. The first was upon the death of his grandfather and friend, King Edward VII, when he and his brother Albert followed the Royal coffin on foot. With this ceremony ended a companionship which was very dear and very novel for the Prince. The grandfather, whom in child-

in his robes of state at the Coronation of his father and mother as King and Queen of England. All the Royal children except the infant John were to be present at the ceremony, but the chief part, except for the King and Queen themselves, was to be played by the Prince of Wales. As heir to the throne even his robes and coronet were



[Central News.

H.R.H. AS MIDSHIPMAN, H.M.S. "HINDUSTAN."

hood days he knew as "Grandfather Marlborough," had always been a great influence with the boy, and with the passing of this very democratic, wholly unconventional friend, a large portion of his "natural" life was buried also.

A year later Prince Edward, now at last really the Prince of Wales, made his début

more ornate than those of his brothers, to emphasise the difference of his position.

He and his sister, Princess Mary, with his brothers, Princes Albert, Henry and George, drove to the Abbey in one of the State coaches, unaccompanied by tutors or attendants to see that they maintained the dignity of the ceremony. Prince Edward and

Princess Mary, as befitted their age, wore an air of aloof splendour that appealed highly to their younger brothers' acute sense of the ridiculous. In red and ermine, with unaccustomed coronets upon their heads, the Royal children took their places in the gilded coach amid the unimpressed laughter of Albert, Henry and George. The Prince of Wales, who had been coached with great care by Mr. Hansell, was deeply shocked at this distressing display of unseemly levity, and chided them with a gravity that did not one whit diminish their amusement. Prince George even, in a paroxysm of mirth, slipped off the shiny seat of the State coach on to the floor-an example which Princess Mary's coronet provokingly followed. confusion which ensued was only checked by elder-brotherly but undignified threats on the part of the Prince of Wales.

The dim majesty of the Abbey succeeded in checking these youthful spirits, and all spectators were deeply impressed by the Prince of Wales's conduct, and that of his brothers and sister, as he sat upon the right hand of the King and, later kneeling, took the vow of fealty to his father. The spectators, not being admitted to the Royal coach, missed the more human but less dignified sight of Prince George enduring the return journey to the Palace in a somewhat cramped position under the seat, where he had been placed by his brothers!

Shortly before this, close upon his sixteenth birthday, the Prince of Wales had made an appearance as chief personage in another religious ceremony. This was his confirmation, which was performed with simple ceremony by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the Dean of Windsor and Canon Dalton.

Meanwhile the people of Wales were realising that there was a Prince who bore their name, and was now old enough to take his part in public pageantry. As they pointed out, no Prince of Wales had been invested in the country since Edward I had made his magnificent gesture at the expense of his infant son more than six hundred years before, and this seemed an excellent opportunity to revive "this ancient and honourable ceremonial," further to cement the bonds of loyalty between two peoples.

At last the day of the ceremony arrived. In the background lay Carnarvon Castle—a tribute to the Empire-builders of an earlier day, with its rugged grey walls rising impassive from the water. They are the only recorded examples of passivity on that

momentous occasion. In the foreground a vast crowd of Welshmen from far and near watched the proceedings with intense fervour. The Prince of Wales performed his rôle admirably—a foretaste of his future eminence in such situations. Fair and slim, he at first appeared "pale and nervous" as befitted a youngster taking the star part, but of course all the time, with the help of his magnificent purple robes, he was every inch a Prince. To the great joy of the Welsh people, the Prince made his speech in their native tongue, which he did without one mistake, thanks to the careful and painstaking coaching of Mr. Hansell.

. V.

ADOLESCENCE: FROM MIDSHIPMAN WALES TO "LE PAUVRE PETIT PRINCE."

THE Prince attained his majority at the age of eighteen, and this event naturally formed an important milestone in his life. He now began to shoulder the full responsibilities of his position, fully alive to everything that was demanded of him. "Since that age he has really changed but little either in outward appearance or manner." Thus said one of his most intimate and life-long friends to me quite recently.

It is now no longer possible to provide a chronicle of boyish pranks and ailments, for the last of the former was already left behind in the past under the guidance of his tutor, while the last of the latter, in the form of a mild attack of measles while at Dartmouth, was over by the time he was invested Prince of Wales at Carnaryon.

It was between his passing out from Dartmouth and the completion of his naval career upon the *Hindustan* that the Prince was introduced to the more magnificent of those ceremonies which were to constitute so large a part of his future profession. His investiture at Carnarvon was preceded by his initiation into the most noble Order of the Garter by his father, the King, amid a throng of exalted members of the Order.

A few weeks after occurred a brief interlude during which the Prince shared the delight of the present biographer in being enabled for a short time to forget that he was anything more than a very ordinary young man. The King informed him that, upon the advice of Mr. Hansell, it had been decided that for a short time at least le

was to be allowed to continue his career in the Navy by taking up the position of a midshipman upon the battleship *Hindustan*, commanded by Captain Henry Campbell, an officer specially selected for his clear-headed refusal to treat his subordinates as personages exalted participant in the nature of a pleasure trip. Actually, no doubt, it was the most pleasurable voyage he had undertaken. For at his age even the most careful training of a painstaking tutor could not yet have submerged the normal instinct of a healthy



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H.R.H. AS COLONEL OF THE WELSH GUARDS.

of individual rank, but only upon their merits as units in the ship. The Prince naturally was delighted to hear this news, which would provide a welcome relief to his recent preoccupation with ceremonial dignity.

The three months' cruise was not for its

boy to be comparatively unobserved. Upon the *Hindustan* he was a mere "snotty," subject to the discipline which all these budding seamen have to undergo. At Osborne and at Dartmouth to wear the uniform of a midshipman had been the ever-present ambition of most of the cadets, but once on board a ship the glory of the position was found to have somewhat departed. With regard to the apportionment of blame for any errors that occur, the "snotty" occupies a position intermediate between a sublicutenant and the ship's cat, with a closer approximation to the latter.

From 5 a.m. until "pipe down" at 9.30 the midshipman is hard at work in an attempt to earn his honest pay of 1s. 9d. per day, chiefly by directing and commanding parties of A.B.'s with twice his age, experience, and language at their disposal. Such a training tends to make a boy self-reliant and resourceful both in his manner and his vocabulary, and it was this training that the Prince of Wales underwent.

The Prince once said in my hearing that the happiest days of his life were those spent on board H.M.S. Hindustan. During his first weeks on board he was relegated to the lowest rung of the ladder of commissioned ranks and became, in the expressive slang of His Majesty's Navy and of that peculiar argot used in the gun-room of all His Majesty's warships, a "Wart"—meaning the most junior of junior midshipmen—beings who exist, in the opinion of all commissioned officers of higher ranks—and the gun-room sub-lieutenant in particular—solely to "fetch and carry" and make themselves as unobtrusive as possible.

On one occasion, when Princess Mary arrived unannounced on board the *Hindustan* to see her brother, she asked for him from the first "snotty" she saw.

"Oh, Wales?" replied this young officer.

"Oh yes, I'll find him," and seeing another brother "snotty" coming towards him, said,

"Hi, So-and-so, where's the new 'wart'?"

"Wart?" queried Princess Mary. A very red-faced young naval officer, realising his faux pas, disappeared in haste down the nearest companion-way without answering.

Altogether the Prince of Wales enjoyed every moment of those first days at sea, and even now he looks forward keenly to each new cruise because it will take him once more into the company of those he likes best—the commissioned ranks of the Royal Navy. During his several later cruises in the Renown he enjoyed himself to the full, and he said at a farewell dinner after one such cruise: "I thank every one of you" (speaking to the assembled officers) "for giving me such a jolly good time. I shall look forward to serving again with you in this good ship."

Returning to this biography, however,

we must record that it was with the deepest regret he was called upon to leave the *Hindustan* for the last time and resume once more his career as Prince of Wales just before his parents' historic tour of India.

It was at Weymouth that he left the Navy. A heavy gale was blowing when he embarked upon the pinnace containing Mr. Hansell that was to carry him back to his real job. With the presence of Mr. Hansell the Prince ceased to be a "wart" and "Mr. Midshipman Wales" and became once more "His Royal Highness." It was as Prince of Wales that he made his speech to the officers at the top of the gangway before leaving. "I thank you very much," he said quietly. "The cruise has been a real pleasure. have learnt to know you, and wish you all success and happiness in the future." Half an hour before, in the security of the gunroom, he had gathered all his fellow "snotties" round him and, shaking hands with each, had said informally: "Good-bye, chaps, and the best of luck to you!" As the Prince left the vessel, the band played "God Bless the Prince of Wales," the officers saluted, and the crew manned the ship's side and cheered. It was a forlorn and miserable young officer who stood wrapped in oilskins in the stern of the departing pinnace waving a sad hand towards the receding battleship and the crew he had grown to love so well.

At Sandringham the Prince spent a brief and pleasant holiday until November 11th, 1911, when his father and mother embarked upon the *Medina* for India and the Prince was left to carry on undisturbed his routine of studies.

In his parents' absence, Queen Alexandra supplied the element of family life that was still necessary and delightful to him, and it was with her that the Christmas of the Royal children was spent. It was also with her that the Prince of Wales attended many semi-public functions.

Early in February the King and Queen returned from their voyage and were greeted eagerly upon the gangway by their eldest son. But this return made little difference to his studies, save that their venue was changed from Sandringham, where there was at least the relaxation of country sports occasionally, to Buckingham Palace.

At this time there seems to have been some question as to whether the Prince should go to Oxford or Cambridge—a hesitation at which Cambridge men were greatly surprised, but in the public mind Oxford

had all the prestige of seniority. Eventually it was decided that Oxford should be his University, but before he went up he was destined to spend a few months in France to polish up his French and to cement the Entente Cordiale.

more be as he was on the *Hindustan*—one of the crowd more or less—a young man among young men rather than a Prince among his subjects. Oxford represents an important stage in his career because it developed much more fully his character



A CHAT WITH MR. LLOYD GEORGE.

Van lyk.

By the end of his stay in France the Prince had attained his official majority, and though it was not until 1914 that he was relieved of the supervision of his tutor, the days of his secluded boyhood were past. At Oxford the Prince knew he would once

—and here it was that for the first time he was to enjoy a freedom which even during his brief sojourn in the Navy he had been unable to indulge owing to the strict rules and traditions of the Senior Service. VI.

THE PRAGGER-WAGGER,

OR

AT OXFORD AND NEARLY OF IT.

ADDINGTON STATION. to the poetically minded, is the gateway to Oxford University, and it was in this capacity that it was visited by the Prince of Wales on October 11th, 1912, when, stepping into a first-class carriage, he was swiftly carried through the wooded vistas of the Thames Valley. These vistas were fading into darkness when the gasometers on one side and the cemetery upon the other indicated that H.R.H. had arrived at the "City of dreaming Spires," much as any other freshman might arrive. But at the station the manner of his reception was less usual. The ordinary fresher, on reaching the station platform, is obliged to wait until by some dispensation of providence a disengaged porter and a disengaged taxi happily coincide, when he is enabled to retrieve his luggage from a monumental pile, and, sinking exhausted into a taxi, is rattled away to the College at a prohibitive fare. H.R.H., though he was going up as an ordinary "fresher," was spared this introduction to University life.

As his train arrived, a committee of prominent citizens including the Mayor stepped forward and officially welcomed the Prince to the city, while the Chancellor of the University and other personages of note welcomed the Royal "freshman" to their University. The Prince eventually disappeared from view into the quadrangle of Magdalen College, where Dr., now Sir Herbert Warren, the President of Magdalen, received him. This don soon became an intimate personal friend of the Prince and it was to him that H.R.H. constantly went for academic advice during his sojourn at the University. Oxford is still largely a repository of stories about Sir Herbert Warren. I repeat one story that no one can reach Oxford without at some time hearing; it is one of the 'Varsity's most cherished "chestnuts." It is said that upon one occasion Dr. Annie Besant wished that her new Messiah should receive the benefits of a University education. She therefore approached the President of Magdalen and after explaining the rank of her protégé finished with the statement that it was necessary that he should be known by a name which meant "the son of God," Sir Herbert Warren, bowing courteously, is reputed to have replied: "That will present no difficulties, madam; we are perfectly accustomed to the sons of distinguished men at Magdalen..."

We may therefore rest assured that the Prince's dignity was safe in such keeping, and it was doubtless a tribute to Dr. Warren's personality that H.R.H. chose Magdalen as his College rather than Christ Church, with which his grandfather had at least a nominal connection.

It had been the intention of the Royal Family that H.R.H. should depart from the precedent of his grandfather (who while up at Christ Church had a house of his own and took no part in University work or life) and come up as an ordinary freshman; he therefore went through the ancient and unimpressive ceremony of matriculation with the other men in his College dressed in an ordinary commoner's gown, in contrast to King Edward who had matriculated as a nobleman at a special ceremony arranged for the purpose.

The Prince entered easily into 'Varsity life. One of his most pleasing characteristics has always been his ability to be what the Americans call a good "mixer"; he is extraordinarily easy to get on with, and his total lack of side and swank at Oxford soon caused him to be accepted by the other undergraduates as a really good fellow. He attended private parties, was not above drinking his share at such "binges," and altogether succeeded in enjoying a freedom which up to this time had been foreign to his life.

It is undeniably true that the Prince was much more democratic than previous Royal undergraduates had been. He had, as has been mentioned, rooms in College in a corner of the most beautiful quadrangle in England. He attended meals in hall, where the Latin grace said by the scholars is more in the nature of a ripe tradition than a pæan of praise. He regularly attended lectures until he discovered that Oxford men generally find more entertaining methods of passing the morning. He wrote weekly essaysthose inevitable academic assurances of industry, which, however, he handed directly to the President of his College himselfa privilege no ordinary freshman would

Apart from certain special privileges, which the Prince himself would have preferred to dispense with, H.R.H. led as ordinary an Oxford life as he could, His rank

and duty, however, demanded that he should still have attached to his person an equerry and a private tutor. One can readily realise that at times the presence of this "skeleton staff" rather irked him, but both tutor and equerry were charming men, for whom the Prince had a very deep and sincere affection. Mr. Hansell, who had been with him from early childhood, has already had almost continuous mention in these pages. The Prince's equerry, Major the Hon. William Cadogan, deserves some further note. Though he was some years older than H.R.H., he was his greatest friend and companion in all the social and athletic interests of the Prince's Oxford career. He had been especially seconded from his regiment to serve as equerry, and so well had this selection been made that probably no one at this stage had more influence on the heir to the throne than had Cadogan. His greater age, besides being a necessity, was probably an asset in enabling him to establish an influence over the Prince, and his splendid horsemanship, his fine prowess at polo and his all-round athleticism did nothing to diminish his effect. He was, in fact, a very fine straightforward Englishman, who, with so many of his type, was killed in the Great War.

It is remarkable that few authentic anecdotes have survived of the Prince's stay at Oxford. Upon inquiry many stories are forthcoming, but as all are clearly apocryphal in origin and have been applied to distinguished Oxford men almost from the founding of the University down to the present day, it would be useless and probably libellous to record them.

In his work H.R.H. did not take a normal course for Greek or History or Law, but is said to have specialised in History, Geography, French, German, English Literature, Political Science and Political Economy. Although this catholic form of specialisation prevented the Prince from sitting for any of those irksome examinations that are a sporadic and distressing feature of Oxford life, he still occasionally attended lectures on the subjects that he studied. small crowds used to gather round the gates to watch his entrance and exit, but this practice was discouraged both by familiarity and the undergraduates who at times damped the enthusiasm of the watchers by douches of cold water from above—it is said at the instigation of the Prince himself, although I do not vouch for the truth of this.

Apart from lectures, the chief features of

the intellectual life of a University are the essays and the tutorials, each of which takes place once a week. His essays the Prince took direct to the President of Magdalen, who corrected them as severely as loyalty would allow, while for tutorials H.R.H. had another don in the person of the Vice-President of Magdalen, who at times did not forget to inculcate his own views on kingship. It is said that upon one occasion a visiting don walked into the Vice-President's room while the Prince was having a tutorial. Seated upon a sofa, looking somewhat scared, was the slim form of the pupil, while before the fire, a stately figure in his M.A. gown, was his tutor, wagging a finger and exclaiming with great sincerity: "My boy, you must always remember the fate of the Bourbons . . ." The position of Jeremiah to His Royal Highness was thus not entirely untenanted. If we add to lectures, essays and tutorials, the frequent private lessons that the Prince received at the hands of Mr. Hansell, we have probably devoted more than enough attention to the working side of his life at Oxford.

On the athletic side there was more variety. As far as the normal man's games were concerned, his was not a particularly bright star in the athletic firmament. The Prince's real interest was not in the College games, but in riding and hunting, apart from which he played desultory and indifferent games of golf and tennis.

In the summer, when no hunting was available, he used to devote his energies to polo, at which he became a by no means indifferent performer.

But after all, it is not the athletic but the social side of Oxford life that distinguishes it from other places of amusement, and the social side of the Prince's visit requires more than a passing mention. Wine, women, and song—the immortal trinity lose their feminine member at Oxford, where although there are undergraduettes, no selfrespecting Oxford man would devote his attention to them! But even with this omission, there are opportunities for amusement that do not occur in other parts of the civilised world-only at Cambridge. Dinners at Oxford may be divided into two types just dinners and—blinds! Of the latter, it is perhaps unnecessary to remark, H.R.H. officially attended none, but there were times when, returning down the High at a late hour, the high spirits of his companions were hardly "sans reproche," largely because their realisation that no policeman would

arrest the Prince had made them "sans peur." "Skylarking I've seen him, just like anyone else," says a College porter. "They were throwing cushions at him and he was throwing them back." The throwing of cushions in public streets—a pleasure indigenous to Oxford—was therefore one of which the Prince was not unaware. The dinners of the first type—just dinners—were generally more of a strain to the Prince, for though he was present as an ordinary undergraduate there always seemed

of tin-pans, combs and so forth from regions below reminded him that there were other residents with even more sensitive musical ears.

H.R.H. had on this occasion the last word, since he produced some bagpipes, against which, in the hands of an unskilled player, no other noise can compete. Besides these musical evenings that were not entirely appreciated by the authorities, there were the long evenings devoted to talk of all descriptions.

To sum up, apart from the cabman who voiced resentment at the Prince's private car in the words "Call im a Prince? Why, 'e 'asn't taken a — keb in these two years!" the attitude of the normal townsfolk and College servants was that "vou couldn't tell 'im from an ordinary undergraduate" (except that he always ran to lectures), while the attitude of the normal Oxford man who was up at the time of the Prince was one of indifference, except in "Eights Week," when visiting relatives always wished to have His Royal Highness pointed out to them.

Those undergraduates who had the social cachet of the Prince's acquaintance found him a pleasant and unselfconscious friend, and apart from the official dignity of his tutor, equerry and chauffeur, but little different from the normal man whose tastes ran in

from the normal man whose tastes ran in the expensive direction of hunting and polo.

The "Pragger-wagger," as the Oxford University slang has it, was undoubtedly at Oxford and very nearly of it.

That he enjoyed the time he spent at Oxford is without question. He worked and played hard, made many friends, and altogether did credit to his College. One of many royalties at the University, he made his mark more than any other. Oxford

will always remember him.

[Central News.

A REFRESHER DURING POLO.

to be a spontaneous desire to hear a speech from him—an attention which an ordinary undergraduate seldom receives, and would welcome no more than the Prince if he did.

Finally there remain to be mentioned the evenings which occur so often when the inspiration of the moment is left to supply the entertainment. They may be spent in one's own rooms alone, as the Prince did on at least one occasion extracting halting melodies from a flute, until a cacophonous medley

VII.

PRELUDE TO TRAGEDY.

HIS Oxford life of gowned obscurity did not flow entirely undisturbed. Every now and then there were public functions that had to be attended, and in the early spring of his first year, 1913, there was a visit to Germany in the company of Professor Fredla, who held the

chair of German at Oxford. These travels were for the purpose of assisting the Prince's progress in the German language and his understanding of the German people, with whom at that time there was little sign of the approaching storm.

This trip in the spring was followed in July by another of a more ceremonial nature. He stayed with the Kaiser himself in Berlin and saw for the first time the pomp and ceremony of a foreign Royal Court in which no democratic ideas had yet produced anomalous theories of constitutional monarchy, where the unfortunate King has to combine two functions figurehead and man.

The German Emperor, following the Prince's visit, made this comment about his departed guest: "A most charming, unassuming young man such as one might expect from such a family — but a young eagle likely to take a big part in European affairs because he is far from being a pacifist."

This chapter is, however, more occupied with the Prince's training as a soldier before those years in which he followed the British Army out to France and took as large a share as he was allowed in the fighting and discomfort of the trenches. Contrary to the general opinion, his initial training as a soldier occurred while he was still up at the University in the form of that admirable institution, the Oxford University O.T.C. It has been a tradition that the eldest son of the reigning monarch should hold a commission in both branches of the Service, and as the Prince had already completed a fairly thorough training as a sailor, it was time he commenced his course as an officer in the Army, which but for the War would have occupied the next few years of his life. The opening of hostilities only precipitated the Prince into military life of the A.D.C.



[Alfieri.

H.R.H. INSPECTING YEOMANRY DURING THE WAR.

type a year earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

It must have been somewhat irksome for the Prince, after occupying the exalted position of midshipman in command of ablebodied seamen, to be obliged to start again as a private in what is after all a very amateur training-ground for the Army. The duties of a private at Oxford are not tiresome, for only fifteen parades a year are necessary to ensure efficiency, but they also involve attendance for ten days at the annual camp.

He was by then already a corporal—a rank to which any keen member is swiftly raised—and was therefore excused from the disillusioning tasks of collecting tea in an iron dixie in the early morning and receiving a similar fluid under the name of soup in the same receptacle later in the day. But his rank did not excuse him from that unpleasant feature of camp life, the early rising after inadequate ablutions, for as corporal he had at times to take charge of parties of unfortunate privates who performed the various menial fatigue duties.

This peaceful training for his military career, together with his life at Oxford, were interrupted in August, 1914, by the declaration of War. Even a mere fifteen years afterwards it is impossible to recall the feelings that were roused in the youth of England by that short proclamation of His Britannic Majesty. For nearly sixty years Great Britain had not taken part in military operations that were close enough at hand for the whole country to realise. There was the Boer War, it is true, but it was too remote for Englishmen to feel that anything more than their military pride was involved. the Great War not only honour, but hearth and home and lives were in jeopardy, and in their ignorance of all the mud and filth and boredom of a prolonged struggle the young men of England rushed headlong to enlist.

The Prince of Wales was among those to whom the call came keenest. Behind him was a training for battle in the Navy, which, coming at his most impressionable age, must have had no small effect upon his character.

At first it was thought that the Prince should join up as an ordinary officer in the Navy, but the perpetual menace of the submarines made this risk too great. true that his death would not have seriously disturbed the succession to the throne, but it would have had an enormous effect upon the morale of the British Empire. It was not his fault that he had been made a figurehead of British youth, where destruction would have been felt as a personal loss in thousands of simple homes. It was his handicap, and a handicap that prevented him from playing the part in the Great War that he would have preferred to play.

Thus it was decided that he was to join the Army, where it would be possible for him to feel that he was playing some part for his country, and at the same time he would be subjected to sufficient supervision to prevent him from running any risk of death, or—what would be worse—of capture by the enemy.

Accordingly when the Prince was given permission to take up his commission as a subaltern in the Grenadier Guards, it was with the reservation that he was not to be allowed to go to the Front—a reservation of which the Prince was supposed to be unaware. When he applied for leave to go to France, as he did upon the outbreak of hostilities, he was very reasonably told by Lord Kitchener that he must "go back and learn a little more about soldiering"—a necessary warning for one whose experience had been restricted to the Oxford University Officers' Training Corps.

Accordingly he returned to barracks as a subaltern in the Guards and occupied his time in those tedious proceedings which are supposed to make subalterns into officers and to breed in them a necessary respect for the powers that be. He was drilled with other recruit officers by an irascible sergeant in the barrack square and went through the interminable but necessary routine that turns a recruit into a precise machine. He in his turn drilled N.C.O.'s and men in a creditable imitation of the manner of the drill sergeant whom he had left but a little while before. And he got to know his men on those friendly terms that are possible between officers and privates at that stage of their career when they realise that both are outdone in military knowledge by their N.C.O.'s.

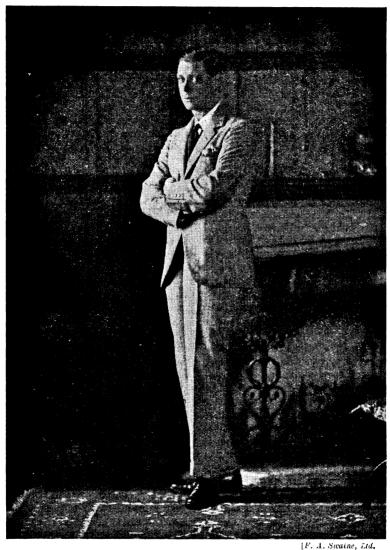
All this, of course, was but the usual training of a subaltern, aggravated by the fact that the regiment was preparing for service in France. Hundreds and thousands of other boys were undergoing it. It required no heroic qualities—merely a temporary overcoming of imagination, which is no difficult task in the average healthy Army youngster. But to H.R.H. it was in the nature of a godsend, and probably the War years which were so dark a tragedy for the rest of the nation enabled his character to survive the interminable cosseting and admiration of Princeship.

During the War the nation was too fully occupied to spend any time in admiring its Prince in ceremonial dress. All it required was an occasional picture of him playing the same part in the same grim tragic game as its own sons and husbands. As a result the Prince was allowed to behave very much as

an ordinary man. He was brought into contact with the men of his own regiment, where for the first time he might choose his own friends and acquaintances.

It was in the middle of September that his regiment was despatched to France, where H.R.H. was hoping to accompany them.

trained to be an efficient officer, he realised perfectly well that the real reason he was refused for active service was his title. This dispiriting realisation lasted for two months, when it was discerned not only that H.R.H. was himself very keen to see the fighting, but that it was politic for him to go. Such



A STUDIO PORTRAIT IN EARLY MANHOOD.

But this natural ambition was doomed to disappointment, since the powers that be still considered it unwise that he should be exposed to danger. Accordingly the Prince went back to those long duties of routine that were beginning to lose their freshness. Although the excuse given for his remaining at home was that he was not sufficiently

an action would have a beneficial effect upon the morale of the troops, and might also, and indeed did, provide a great stimulus to recruiting at home.

Thus in November, 1914, His Royal Highness received the welcome news that he had been gazetted for service in France.

VIII.

TRAGEDY!

LONG the dull flat contours of the Flemish plain, where the thrifty Flemish peasant had, but a short time before, won a precarious livelihood from the ever-grasping hands of poverty and nature, ran a wide and jagged line of mud and carnage where the civilised world did battle for its faiths. Mud and water filled the scarred outlines of the shellholes and the thin zigzag ribbon of trenches. A few broken trees outlined against the sky bore mute witness to a fertility that human passions had ravaged. Torn and dirty figures in musty khaki moved slowly and perpetually in the trenches and passed intermittently along the shell-swept roads. Above all raged the incessant inferno of a storm of firing.

Men who but a month or two before had been filled with a wild enthusiasm for a combat which could satisfy the primeval love of battle settled grimly down to a life where boredom was only averted by the ever-stalking image of death. Enthusiasm waning with custom had given place to a bitter fatalistic view. Routine was again playing its part in making life bearable, and the perpetual menace of a bullet that would maim or kill was forgotten until the sudden absence of a comrade, who had a few hours before been sulking or jesting with the rest, recalled to mind the imminence of death.

It was to such a life as this that H.R.H. and his contemporaries from thousands of homes were unwittingly looking forward in their home-bred ignorance of the conditions of modern civilised warfare. And it was to such conditions that many of them went.

Those who went out as regimental officers to lead their men in the front-line trenches settled down to this dreary life until death or wounds or longed-for leave gave them some variety to refresh their flagging spirits. was never that the morale was bad; only that the long, dreary discomfort of day following its fellow-day, a long night following its fellow-night, made it impossible to retain those ardours, those enthusiasms, that could see the War in all its vast, complete significance. Instead there was substituted an almost unconscious, almost hysterical determination to carry on towards the one small objective of wresting a few yards from the hidden enemy or of holding one's own insignificant portion of line until the arrival

of a relief battalion would grant a brief respite behind the lines.

To H.R.H. there was left a more harrowing sphere of action. While he was crossing to France, he learnt to his great disappointment that he was not to proceed to the trenches, but was to be attached to the general staff as A.D.C. to Sir John French. Though by regimental officers the "brass hats" were looked upon with a contempt almost akin to hatred, their comparative immunity from the viler discomforts of war scarcely compensated for the wider view of the whole grim tragedy which their position gave them.

As staff officer, therefore, H.R.H. made his longed-for departure for France. At that time the shadow of death had not yet cast its shade on those enthusiasms for fighting that even his twenty years' training could not entirely subdue. Those were the same enthusiasms that caused the cream of British manhood to flock to the colours before the grim reality of the situation impressed upon the whole nation the gravity of our need of men. It was therefore at first with feelings of deep chagrin that the Prince realised that he was not to proceed to the front line, but to be occupied on tasks of minor routine as assistant to the military commander. so at first he seized every opportunity of escaping from his superiors, who thus had added to their other duties the anxiety of responsibility for his safety. It was a struggle of wits between them and him, no less real because it was cloaked by their superior military rank and his superior civil one. Whenever opportunity occurred and duty did not call him elsewhere he made endeavours to reach the front line and to see what in those early days was called by the inexperienced "the fun." There was a time when after dinner at G.H.Q. it was found that H.R.H. was missing from his quarters and had disappeared along the road that led to the trenches. With breathless anxiety staff officers leapt into powerful cars and scoured the country for the missing fugitive. Throughout the pitch darkness, rain and slush of the night the search progressed until about morning, amid a group of muddy poilus, His Royal Highness was found taking a hand at cards. In the gloom of a dugout the flickering light of a single candle showed up the blue jowls of the unwashed and unshaven French privates, and the slim, clean, boyish face of the heir to the British throne. Rembrandt might have painted the scene in subtle shades of light and darkness.

H.R.H., it appeared, had borrowed the

motor-cycle of a resting despatch rider, and started out hot-speed along the long straight road that leads towards the battlefield of the Somme. As he approached the front lines, evidence of their propinquity grew more frequent in the form of deep shadews looming up in the surface of the road where shells had fallen. One of these had caused the anti-climax of his expedition, for, unawares, he ran the motor-cycle into it and

smashed it beyond hope of repair. A near-by party of poilus had provided his entertainment until his anxious guardians arrived.

December, 1914, found H.R.H. still comparatively unshaken by his distant view of warfare. consisting again in a more or less official rôle when by the side of his father, King George, and the King of the Belgians, watched a grand march past of the Belgian troops. Belgium was already a captured country, and the whole ceremony was pregnant with pathos, as the long drab khaki lines of men marched by the Royal group - not professional warriors, but peasants, labourers and bourgeois under arms, struggling to regain the homes they had lost. And it was with no ceremonial pomp that King George's visit to his troops was carried out. A car or two, splashed with the mud of war-worn Flemish roads; a guard of aeroplanes circling above his

head, and ever and anon the devastating crash of howitzer shells bursting not far away.

To the Kaiser's credit it must be noted that he had given express orders that if the King of England visited France no attempt was to be made to shell him, but for H.R.H. there was no such exemption from risks. His early position on the staff at G.H.Q. minimised these risks, but even then he had some narrow escapes from death—escapes

that, coupled with the sight of death around him, must have done much to broaden his still youthful outlook.

On one occasion H.R.H. was obliged to leave his car for a few moments in order to carry out some of his duties, and on his return he found the mangled remains a mass of wreckage. More dreadful still was his discovery that his chauffeur, who had driven him since his Oxford days, had been shattered to



[L. N. A.

WITH THE CROWN PRINCE OF SWEDEN AT THE TROOPING OF THE COLOUR.

pieces by the same German shell. It was a discovery that could not but deepen the rather shallow view of youth towards war, and H.R.H., with a little kindly thought that even the shock could not eradicate, himself collected the man's personal belongings to convey them to his chauffeur's relations in England.

After such experiences H.R.H. began to realise that war was no longer fun and adventure, but something much more sordid, and

he made no more foolhardy attempts to risk his life unnecessarily in search of excitement.

On one occasion, in a little village street not far behind the lines, H.R.H. was walking when an enemy Taube swept low out of the sky, raking the street with machine-gun fire. H.R.H. took shelter in a near-by ambulance station, and was found some minutes later lending a hand to the nuns there ministering to the wounded. There were other times when H.R.H. would be found visiting the hospitals behind the lines, and, passing down the long white rows of beds, would find a cheery word or a silent handshake for men for whom the sands of life were running low. There was an occasion when in his visits to the wounded he passed a bed round which the screens had been already drawn to hide the form of death. H.R.H., quietly slipping round the screen, gazed upon the now serene, war-weary face for one brief moment, and leaning reverently forward imprinted a quick, half-shamed kiss upon the cold brow. were times when at the base some sports were organised among a resting regiment, or a garrison horse show, to keep up the spirits and morale of tiring men, and H.R.H. would be found again—a slim, genial figure encouraging and cheering with the rest. were times when overhead would be heard the roar of aeroplanes, and in the sky above duels between German and English airmen would drag on to their inevitable conclusion —death; and H.R.H. would be there cheering the English plane, and if, as on one occasion, the victorious airman landed, those at hand would run over and congratulate him upon his victory. There was a time early in November when the Prince, on leave in England, heard that Lord Roberts had Leaving the comforts of home life, he crossed at once to France, and accompanied the coffin back to England as an act of homage to one of the finest servants of the There were times when H.R.H. would be home on leave, without official duties, and would spend his days much like any other soldier, at home at Windsor Castle with his father discussing the sights and tactics of war, and leaving out the ghastly pictures clearly printed on his brain. There was a time in 1916 when H.R.H. accompanied his father round the actual battlefields themselves, showing him all the sights of Army life and danger. There was a time . . .

All through the War H.R.H. was occupied upon a task that, though small in itself, gave him opportunities that few could have of seeing every side of the vast tragedy. His was not only the spectator's part, in the comfort and half-light of the stalls. It was behind the scenes and in the wings, seeing the actors in their undress, with the buskins doffed, the grease-paint washed away, and the ordinary faces of ordinary men revealed. And it is in that view that true tragedy was revealed stark-naked. In four brief years the young princeling of Osborne, Dartmouth and Oxford became the young man whom war had deepened and made grim.

It is for this reason that our news of his activities during the War was restricted to official civil duties at home and in the Allied countries. All other information of his work came vaguely through in letters from men who had seen him driving his battered car along the shell-pitted road, or found him in the trenches by their side, or met him in the hospital or rest camp.

It was perhaps the best way at the time for such unadorned accounts to filter through. It was so much like all the other men who were out there, and emphasised the kinship between H.R.H. and his soldiers.

I T was not only in Flanders and in France that H.R.H. saw active service, though he there earned an act of courtesy on the part of the French, who presented him with the Croix de Guerre. In 1916 he was attached to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force as a staff-captain, and spent some little time with them on the Egyptian Front. H.R.H. once or twice in long tramps across the desert felt some inkling of the conditions under which the War was being carried on in distant quarters of the Empire.

There is no need to sketch again the full picture of the War. The canvas is so vast, too varied in its alternating dim nocturnes and stark crudities for any other than a great master to paint; but across the canvas all the time flits almost imperceptibly the shadow of H.R.H.—not in the searchlight, or in the Vérey light, in ermine or in crimson velvet, but in the fog and mud of battle, a dim figure in war-worn khaki, a man and not a Prince.

Our next issue will contain further extracts from the story of Edward P., with an intimate character sketch of His Royal Highness as man of business and an outline of his great work as "Ambassador of Empire."

A NIGHT IN THE LIFE OF A BISHOP

By W. TOWNEND

● ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

HE Bishop entered his study, frowning.

"Any letters?" he asked curtly.

His chaplain, seated at the big flat-topped mahogany desk under the greenshaded electric lamp, rose from his chair, spilled papers on to the Turkey carpet, and, stooping to recover them, dropped his spectacles.

"Do be less clumsy, Soper, please," said

the Bishop.

He moved across to the hearthrug and stood with his back to the blazing fire, a fine upright figure in evening clothes, black silk waistcoat, clerical collar, knee-breeches,

black silk stockings and pumps.

"That man, Cliff-Jones, is giving trouble again," he said. "Lady Hurstwood, who's just returned from London, by the way, was telling me at dinner that her niece, Lady Maude Arun, who's interested in some settlement or other in his parish, says he's been seen drinking in public-houses with women of the lowest character."

The chaplain coughed.

"There's a letter from him here, my lord."
"Oh! You wrote, of course. When is he coming to see me—to-morrow or the day after?"

"As a matter of fact, my lord, he doesn't

intend to come at all."

"What!" said the Bishop. "Give me the letter!" His hand shook as he read what the man had dared to write. "Oh!" he said. "Oh! So Mr. Cliff-Jones can't come and see me; I'm to go and see him. Oh, indeed! So that's it, is it?"

The Bishop's fleshy, square-jawed face took on an expression of sour determination. His little dark eyes narrowed to two slits under his black eyebrows. Deep lines showed on either side of his large, thin mouth. His lower lip and chin were thrust forward belligerently. The nostrils of his

broad, heavy nose expanded. At that moment he resembled a retired pugilist rather than the Prince of the Church, which was how, privately, he regarded himself.

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Presently he said:

"This man, Cliff-Jones, says I'm to go and see him! Well, Soper, I will. At once."

"Not to-night, my lord, surely?"

"To-night. Lady Hurstwood gave me the name of the riverside bar where he spends his evenings. In a case like this first-hand evidence is the only evidence worth having."

It was commonly said that the Bishop owed his success in his chosen career, not only to his family backing in the House of Lords and his fame as a head master of a public school, but also to his boundless and annoying energy in the pursuit of his duty. The more disagreeable the task the more energetic he became. Exile to a provincial see, remote from London, had not lessened what he termed his usefulness. Cabinet Ministers and Under-Secretaries were wont to consider him as being on the whole a shade more to be feared than Communist M.P.'s from the Clyde. Once he had determined on a course of action, no power on earth would turn him. And so when his chaplain timidly suggested that it would be advisable to postpone his visit to Cliff-Jones until a more suitable occasion, he disdained to argue.

"If you can't talk sense, Soper," he said, "don't talk at all. I intend to visit Cliff-Jones this evening at the resort he fre-

quents."

"But, my lord, in episcopal attire?"

"Oh!" The Bishop acknowledged that even Soper showed occasional gleams of intelligence. "I'll wear that old pair of grey flannel bags of mine and an old tweed jacket I have upstairs, and that soft-brimmed

grey hat that got packed in my bag somewhere by mistake."

"And a clerical collar?" said the

chaplain.

"Don't be a fool!" said the Bishop.
"I'll wear a scarf."

He hurried out of the room to change.

A T a plain wooden table in a corner of the crowded bar-room sat a smallish, pale man in shabby grey clothes and a clerical collar, in company with two girls, a disreputable-looking elderly man with a red nose and grey moustache, and a fat middle-aged woman, slightly the worse for drink.

The smallish man had sandy hair and freckles and a good-natured, friendly smile and tired, friendly eyes. He had before him a glass of beer from which from time to time he took a drink. He smoked a black clay pipe. One of the girls was talking to him earnestly, dragging at his arm, as though to keep his attention. Every now and then he would nod his head and tell her to be brief and not wander from the point of her story.

Four or five rough men, with mugs of beer in their hands, stood by the table and listened to what the girl was saying. The man with the red nose and the grey moustache kept muttering to himself: "Oh, the gals! Always the same, eh, missus?" And the fat, middle-aged woman with the flushed face would slap at him mildly across the table with a plump hand and say: "Get on with you, Fred: I'm ashamed!"

The room smelt of stale liquor and foul tobacco and wet and sodden garments, and was so hot and stuffy and noisy that for an instant the Bishop wished he had done as Soper advised and stayed at home.

Not since he had taken orders as a clergyman twenty years before had he entered a public-house, and not even in his unregenerate undergraduate days, when he had studied life in the raw, had he visited so low and disreputable a public-house as this. Once he might have been interested. Not now, however. The lower classes, people such as he beheld from the threshold of the bar-room, appalled him.

A man pushed roughly past him.

"Move out of it, you!"

The Bishop turned and glared at him indignantly, and the man, suddenly apprehensive, perhaps, of having given offence to the large, tough-looking stranger with the scarf round his neck and the scowling face, patted his arm.

"There, there!" he said. "Orl right, chum, ighn't it? Come on an' have a drink!"

He led the way toward the bar. The Bishop, feeling hot about the back of his ears, followed him through the crowd.

"What's yours?" said the man.

"Beer," said the Bishop. "Half a pint." The phrase of his youth came readily to his lips. "My shout."

The man grinned approvingly.

"Much obliged, guv'nor. Well, 'ere's health. Happy days! Down with the police!"

The Bishop drank and hoped that the beer would have no ill effect on a digestion accustomed only to the best.

"Who's that bloke in the corner?" he asked, speaking in what he trusted was the vernacular.

"That feller," said his new friend, "is by way o' bein' a parson. Don't 'old myself with parsons bein' in pubs with gals like that Sal there an' Daisy, her with the red hair, but he means well an' he carries his liquor as good as me or you."

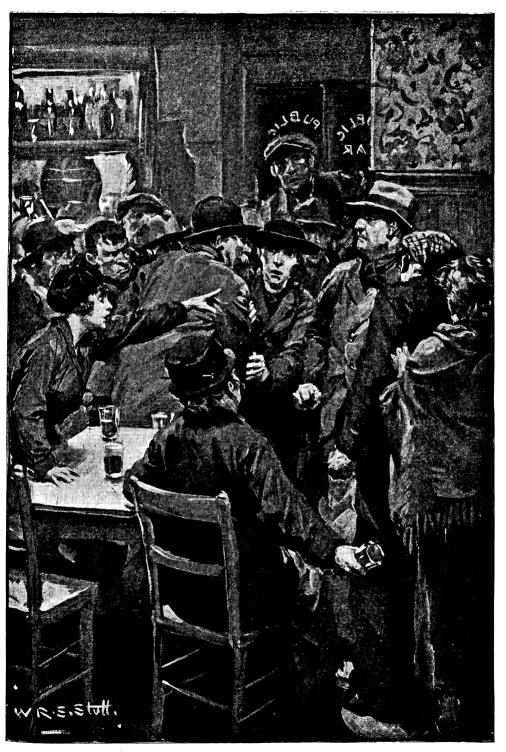
The Bishop studied the group in the corner with a feeling of amazement, and then glanced uneasily at the man for whom he had bought the beer, but the man, apparently not wishing to buy beer in his turn, had edged away from him and was talking to an elderly woman with a shawl over her shoulders and most of her front teeth missing. The Bishop, glad to be rid of him, moved slowly across the room toward the corner table and without shame stood listening to what Cliff-Jones and his disreputable friends were saying.

The girl whose name, it seemed, was Daisy, was quite young, and, in spite of the powder and rouge that disfigured her thin face, almost startlingly pretty. On her bobbed red hair, cut with a straight bang across her forehead, she wore a black velvet beret. Her eyes were grey. Her lips were crimson, applied liberally with a lipstick. Her frock was hidden by a shabby blue mackintosh belted at the waist.

The Bishop thought her horrible.

"But what I want to know is," she said, "suppose a girl tells the truth and another girl is telling lies about her behind her back and setting her man against her, what's she to do?"

"If she can't appeal to the other girl's sense of fairness," said Cliff-Jones, "she'll just have to convince people by the life she



"A woman's shrill voice called out above the shouting and laughter: 'He's a policeman, that's what he is! A tec!'"

lives that she isn't capable of doing what's wrong"

"That's all very well, but this other girl, who's nearer to you this minute than you got any idea, this other girl is telling lies about her!"

On Cliff-Jones's left sat another girl, older than Daisy and more heavily built. Her hair was a jet-black. Her face was flushed a deep red. Her brown eyes expressed contempt and anger as she leaned forward and spoke to Daisy.

"Are you alludin' to me?"

"Does the cap fit, miss?" said Daisy.

"Now, Sal, please," said Cliff-Jones.
"Don't start any trouble!"

"What's she mean by saying things about me for?"

"It's her what's been saying things about me," said Daisy. "I done nothin' wrong, an' she knows it."

"You've done nothing wrong, of course," said Cliff-Jones. "Let's talk about something else."

"Nothin' wrong!" The girl Sal laughed.

"You dunno what Daisy's like."

"Ah, but I do. She's honest and she's kind-hearted and she hasn't been in trouble for—for a long time, have you, Daisy?"

The girl promptly kissed him on the cheek. There was a yell of delight from the men and women around the table.

Cliff-Jones said gravely:

"That's all right for once, Daisy, but don't do it again." He raised his glass and drank. "Please."

And this man, thought the Bishop, this associate with the scum of the riverside, was one of his clergy!

His duty was clear. The man was a pest. A bad example to both Church and laity. He would have to resign his living and go abroad. Anything to avoid scandal and newspaper publicity and the too profuse sympathy of the R.C.'s.

And then the Bishop realised with a sudden shock that the red-headed girl, Daisy, was addressing him from her seat

at the table.

"You, you big stiff, what are you lookin' at me like that for, eh? Want a thick ear, or what? He's been listenin' to every word we been sayin'! Who is he?"

The Bishop, aware of hard, flushed faces and hostile eyes and sneering mouths, would have retreated in confusion, but the disreputable, elderly man with the red nose and the grey moustache rose to his feet unsteadily and put out his hand and stopped him.

"I don' like you," he said thickly. "I don' like your face. I don' like nothin' about you. I'm go'n' to give yer a smack on the jaw." The Bishop stepped swiftly back in time to avoid being hit in the face by a hard right-handed punch. "Stan' still an' fight!"

Cliff-Jones sprang to his feet and pushed past Daisy and the fat, middle-aged woman.

"That'll do, you, Fred! Stop it!"

And then a woman's shrill voice called

out above the shouting and laughter:
"He's a policemen that's what he is

"He's a policeman, that's what he is! A tec!"

Straightway a howl of fury rose from the men and women in the bar. They crowded about the Bishop, threatening him, elbowing each other, shaking their fists and snarling.

"A copper's nark! Take 'im down to the river an' throw him in! Drown him! Choke the swine! Use yer boots on him!"

The Bishop, appalled by the turn of events, shocked by his predicament, clenched his fists and prepared to defend himself to the bitter end.

A glass, thrown by the fat, middle-aged woman with the flushed face, smashed on the wall close to his head. A young woman, not altogether sober, clutched at the loose end of the scarf about his neck and pulled, so that he could scarcely draw breath. While he struggled to loosen her grip someone hit him in the mouth.

Cliff-Jones was shouting:

"Get back! Do you hear me!" He fought his way to the Bishop's side. "Get back, the lot of you! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves! The man's all right. Let him be!"

The stout landlord and a barman with black, oiled hair and a tolerant grin forced

the crowd back.

"Mister," said the landlord, speaking over his shoulder to Cliff-Jones, "we got to get him away, or they'll kill him. Maybe he ain't a policeman, but we don't want no trouble."

Feeling humiliated by the indignities put upon him, the Bishop permitted himself to be hustled out of the bar-room, through a side door into the dark and sordid street.

"You're not hurt, I trust?" said Cliff-

Tones

"I'm not hurt, no," said the Bishop.
"They're not too bad, really," said

Cliff-Jones. "They mean well, anyway."
"They're the most degraded, despicable brutes in existence," said the Bishop.

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"I wouldn't say that," said Cliff-Jones. "Suppose you had to live as they live! What would you be?"

"Do you know who I am?" said the

Bishop.

"Of course. You're the Bishop. A figure of our national life." Cliff-Jones chuckled. "I'm glad to meet you. And now you're here you'd better come home with me. It isn't far."

A thin rain began to fall as they walked away from the public-house.

THE house where Cliff-Jones lived was small and narrow-fronted, with a basement, a ground floor and one upper story, a dark and dismal little place like all the other houses in the small, narrow street near the dock gates.

"This is it," said Cliff-Jones, and pushed

open the door.

The Bishop spoke for the first time since he had asked him if he knew who he was.

"Don't you ever lock your front door?"
"Never. Why should I? I'll go first,

old chap. It's pitch dark."

The Bishop, incensed by the man's familiarity, followed him into the house, which smelt of tobacco smoke and fusty clothing and damp earth.

"Do you mind if we sit in the kitchen?" said Cliff-Jones. "I have a fire there and

nowhere else in the house."

He struck a match and revealed a tiny entrance hall and stained wallpaper and a door on the right. "My study," he said—a steep flight of narrow, uncarpeted stairs leading to the upper floor, and at the end of the hall another door toward which he walked, holding in his hand the lighted match level with his head.

He opened this door, and as the flame died down the Bishop heard him exclaim: "Good Heavens! There's someone here!" And then he struck another match and lit the gas, and the Bishop saw before him a shabby little kitchen furnished as a sitting-room, with the red-headed girl, Daisy, standing in front of the stove, her arms folded across her chest.

And although her large grey eyes gazed at Cliff-Jones boldly as though she dared him to turn her away, and her chin was tilted defiantly, and her too crimson lips were set in a mocking smile, the Bishop sensed that the girl was frightened.

"Well, Daisy," said Cliff-Jones in an easy, conversational tone, "and what brings

you here?"

"And why shouldn't I be here?"

"Why shouldn't you? Why not?"
"I think," said the Bishop sharply, "that

in justice to yourself, Mr. Cliff-Jones, you

ought to explain-"

"Wait one minute," said Cliff-Jones, "please. I don't think you should interfere. I really don't. You wouldn't understand."

"I understand perfectly well. Why is this young woman here, waiting for you? Is there anyone else in the house?"

Cliff-Jones grinned boyishly.

"I'm sure I don't know till I've looked. Sometimes one is astounded to find perfect strangers occupying one's very bedroom!"

The Bishop cut him short.

"Mr. Cliff-Jones, your levity is most

unpleasant."

"Oh, do dry up, you fat ox!" said the girl. "Ain't you learned no sense yet?"

"Daisy," said Cliff-Jones, "don't be rude. Tell me what you're doing here."

"I got nowhere to go," said the girl, making a face at the Bishop.

"Turned out of your room again?"
"Yes. Not my fault this time, neither.

Can I stay the night?"

"Afraid not."

"I got nowhere to go. If the police ketch me sleepin' out they'll pinch me. I'm in trouble enough already, what with one thing an' another, too. I got to sleep, ain't I?"

"What about your man?"

"Blow him! He's ditched me without a word. Shall I tell you what he done?"

"Not now. I've got to find you a place to sleep in." He turned to the Bishop. "Stay here and keep the girl company, will you? And if the police come—"

"Great Heavens!" said the Bishop.

"You'll be quite safe, I promise you. And I won't be long."

"Where are you going?"

"We run a kind of home for women. Sometimes we find some poor soul without a roof over her head, and we send her there and keep her till morning. To-night, unfortunately, I think we're full up. The girl must stay here till I make sure."

"Why not take her with you?" said the

Bishop.

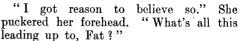
"Certainly not. It's pouring. She must wait."

He went out then, leaving the Bishop and the girl glaring at each other across the kitchen table.

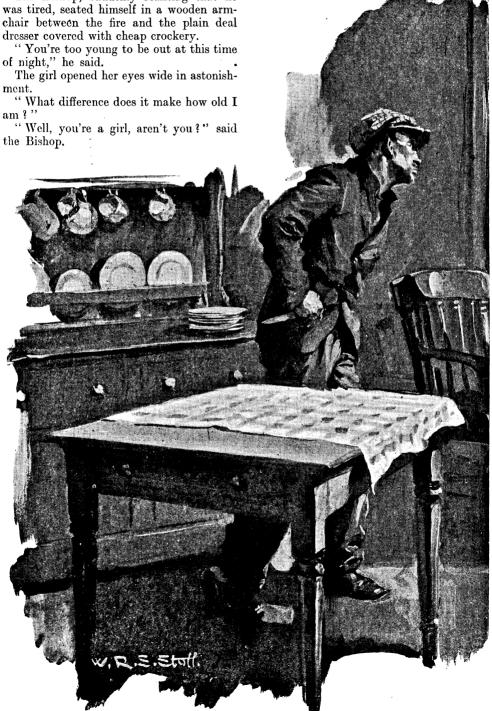
For a minute or so neither spoke. Then

the girl dropped listlessly on to the shiny surface of the cheap little sofa. She pulled off her beret, combed her hair, extracted a small powder-puff from the top of her stocking and powdered her face.

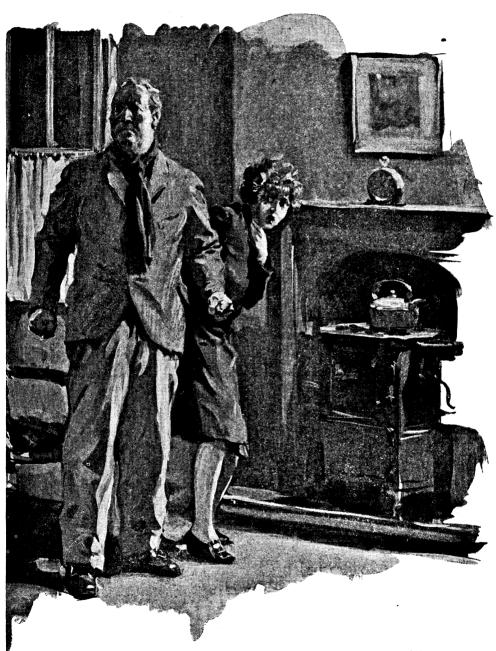
The Bishop, suddenly realising that he



The Bishop felt his cheeks go hot. He



did not quite approve of either his companion or the turn in the conversation. The girl leaned back on the sofa, one leg crossed over the other, showing a considerable hair, glossy in the gaslight, contrasting oddly with the thin face and crimson lips set in a smile of mingled scorn and incredulity.



"The girl screamed: 'Look out for his knife! He'll use it!'"

length of pale pink silk stocking, her hands clasped about her knee, her bobbed, dark-red hair with the straight bang, magnificent

"Why do you call me Fat?" he asked.
"You are fat," said the girl; "that's why. And what are you here for, eh?

Going to touch the parson for a trifle, or what? Why don't you look for a job?" Before the Bishop could sense her intention she had bent forward suddenly and grasped his hand. "Gord! Soft as butter. You ain't no policeman. Soft an' flabby, that's what you are." She pressed her lips tight together and nodded her head. "You're a wicked old thing, Fat, I bet."

"If my conscience approves, then I

answer to no man."

"Anyone would think you'd learned it by heart," said the girl. "Do you come over queer often?" She began to giggle. "I wouldn't be your woman, Fat, not for a five-pound note. An' what's your particular graft, you ol' hypocrick? Buyin', sellin' or stealin'? Where d'you kip?"

"Kip?" said the Bishop.

"You understand. What's the good o' pretendin' you don't? A deep, sly one, that's what you are." She studied him closely, her grey eyes contemplative and shrewd. "You ain't honest, of course. You can't be. You're too fond of your stomach. Ever done a stretch in stir?"

"Prison?"

"Yes. Do you a world of good, Fat. My man went to prison for six months, an' when he come out I didn't know him. It works the booze out your system better than anything."

The Bishop spoke his mind quietly but

firmly.

"You're a bad woman, that's what you are. A thoroughly bad, untrustworthy woman."

The girl, apparently not in the least annoyed, but rather flattered, suddenly became grave. She lifted her right hand with the forefinger perpendicular, and sat in an attitude of strained attention, listening.

"Wait, don't talk!" she whispered.

The Bishop, thoroughly uneasy, listened and heard soft and stealthy footsteps approaching and the creak of floor-boards.

The girl put her hands to her throat.

Suddenly there was a loud, chuckly laugh and she sprang to her feet with a cry of "Spike!" and the Bishop, turning in his chair, saw in the doorway the embodiment of evil—a tall, gaunt young man with black hair and sunken, wicked eyes and a narrow nose with pinched nostrils and thin lips curved into a sneer under a short black moustache. He wore a check cloth cap pulled down over his forehead: his hollow-cheeked face was an unwholesome putty colour in the gaslight: he needed a shave.

Water dripped from his ragged garments on to the lineleum.

"So I got you, have I? How are you, Daisy?"

The Bishop stood up.

"What do you want here?"

The young man gave him a quick sidelong glance.

"Who the 'ell are you? Shut up!" He spoke to the girl in a low, growling voice. "You snitch! They said you was 'ere, you dirty little police spy. I'll swing for you before I done. D'yer hear me?"

The man advanced, shaking all over as though in the grip of some ague, and the

girl retreated.

"I'm not a police spy!" she said huskily.
"You stole that money o' mine. You knew where I hid it, no one else knew. You give me away to the police, an' then you took the swag an' spent it on Sam. Well, all right. I've told the police what Sam done. See! That trouble in—well, you know. See! Cardiff. An' now I'm goin'

to spoil yer beauty. I won't kill you, but I'll bash you."

The girl caught hold of the Bishop's arm. "Stop him, Fat," she said. "I'm scared." "Out the way, you!" said the man, still shaking.

"If you move a step," said the Bishop, "I won't be answerable for the consequences."

The man hesitated. His sunken, wicked eyes glanced first at the girl, then at the Bishop, and he grinned and nodded, "Orl right! Orl right!" and slowly slid his right hand under his jacket toward his hip. The girl screamed:

"Look out for his knife! He'll use it!"
The Bishop hit him on the point of the chin and he crashed on to the floor between the table and the dresser and lay very still, with the blood trickling from the back of his head on to the shabby linoleum.

"He hit his head on the edge of the table," said the girl. "Serve him right if he's

croaked."

The Bishop, feeling sick with horror, knelt by the side of the man he had hit and groped under a sticky, grimy shirt for his heart.

"Thank God, he's still alive," he said.

"Thank Gord, nothin'," said the girl. "When that feller comes to he'll use his knife."

The Bishop took the knife from the man's limp hand.

"I'm not afraid," he said.

"But I am," said the girl. "He's full of hop. We can't wait 'ere. I got to go, an' you got to come with me."

"What for?" said the Bishop, catching

the infection of her fear.

"I got to find Sam. I got to get Sam to tell this murderin' hop-head I didn't do what he says I did. I never split on him. I didn't have nothin' to do with his losin' his swag. I got a nalibi. Me an' Sam was livin' miles away from where he was took. He's afraid of Sam, this Spike is, but he'll believe him. Will Sam come? He don't care for me no more. We had a row an' he run away from me. But he'll help, if he thinks this hound here is going to hurt me. He's got humanity, Sam has, an' I'm scared."

The Bishop felt he could not endure the spectacle of her distress a moment longer. And so when the girl said to him, "Let's go and find Sam!" he made up his mind that it was his duty to accompany her.

She caught hold of his hand and led him out of the little shabby kitchen, out through the front hall, through the front door, into

the dark street.

"WHERE are we going?" asked the Bishop after some minutes of fast walking. The wind had increased in force. The rain beat into his face. "Aren't we near the river?"

The girl nodded her head, and then turned to the right down a narrow footpath between high brick walls, lit by a street lamp at the corner.

The Bishop hesitated.

"Where are we going?"

"To the river."

"Is it safe?"
"O' course it's safe."

The Bishop followed her in silence, until at last the walls ended and the alley opened out on to the river front and the misty lights of shipping and the opposite shore and a flight of wooden steps and another lamp.

The girl halted.

"You got to row me out to a ship," she said.

Without further explanation she descended the wooden steps to a boat that rose and fell on the uneasy surface of the water lapping against the stone embankment.

"What ship?" said the Bishop.

"Sam's ship," said the girl, looking up at him from the boat, her face illumined by the lamp at the head of the steps. "Why,

you silly fool, what d'you think I brought you along for? Come on down, Fat, an' take them oars. You know how to row, don't you?"

"I could row once," he said, and climbed down into the boat. "Whose boat is it?"

"Never you mind whose boat it is." She added less brusquely: "I'll steer. We gotta make haste."

The Bishop untied the painter and pushed off from the steps. The boat swung out into the stream. He settled himself down on the thwart, inserted the oars into the rowlocks and began to row, trusting himself to the girl's knowledge of the river and her ability to handle the tiller.

A wave splashed over the bow and soaked him. He glanced over his shoulder. The

boat was rocking.

"Pull, Fat," said the girl. "Don't look round."

"Will it be far?" he asked after what he judged about ten minutes had passed.

"Shut up an' row! Put some beef into it. This rain makes it 'ard enough to see, but I think we're just on top of her. When I say, 'Way enough!' stop pulling an' hang on to the accommodation ladder if they ain't hoisted it up."

Another five minutes passed and the Bishop, drenched to the skin, his arms and back aching intolerably, heard with relief the girl's brief order: "Way enough now! There's the ladder. Grab hold!"

He shipped the oars hastily, turned and clutched at a rope fastened to the platform at the foot of the ladder.

"Good—oh!" said the girl. "Make fast that painter. Hurry, the tide's runnin' like blazes!"

A man's gruff voice hailed them as they climbed.

"Who are you?"

"Never you mind who we are! I want

Sam Cummings."

They reached the bridge deck and stood under the lower bridge, and a broad, stout man flashed the light of a torch first on to the girl's face, then on to the Bishop's, and growled:

"Well, what's the game?"

"We're here on what I may term an errand of mercy," began the Bishop, but the man cut him short.

"Errand of mercy be blowed! Get down that ladder!"

"Aren't you forgetting yourself?" said the Bishop.

"I'm forgetting myself this much," said

the man, "that if you don't beat it off this ship, I'll call the police boat and have you arrested. What do you mean bringing a young girl on board ship at this time of night? You're the type of man that ought to be strung up and flogged."

The Bishop choked.

"Who are you?" said the girl.

"I'm the mate."

The girl laughed.

"All right, then, that'll be quite enough from you. You're Mr. Molesworth. Listen, you know a man we call Sheeny Joe along the riverside, don't you? Sheeny Joe."

"That's a lie!" said the mate hoarsely. The girl spoke to a man who approached them carrying a hurricane lamp. "Are you

the night watchman?" she asked.
"An' what if I am?"

She turned to the Bishop.

"Go for'ard with the night watchman, Fat, an' get Sam Cummings out of the seamen's fo'c's'le. If he won't come quiet,

lay him out. Make haste."

And the Bishop, amazed that the mate raised no further objection, walked with the night watchman along the foredeck, past hatches and foremast and winches to the seamen's fo'c's'le, a dark and narrow steel prison in the bow of the ship, lit by a smoky oil lamp, smelling of wet clothes and straw and human bodies, and fitted with wooden bunks and a table and benches and a stoye.

"Is Sam Cummings here?" said the

watchman.

A man thrust a tousled head over the edge of a bunk.

"Who the blazes wants Sam Cummings?"
"I do," said the Bishop. He added:
"Mr. Molesworth wants you. The mate."

"I ain't comin'," said the man, and lay down in his bunk and drew a blanket over his head, but the Bishop caught hold of him by one arm and a leg and drew him forcibly out of his bunk, clad only in his shirt, and shook him until voices from the other bunks yelled at him to make less noise.

"Get your clothes on," he said. "No

nonsense now."

The man, apparently dazed, dressed in silence.

"It's raining," said the Bishop. "You'll need your oilskins."

Not until the man saw the girl in the light of the night watchman's hurricane lamp did he speak again.

"You?" he said. "What brought you here?"

"Spike's raising hell. He says I got him

put away an' then walked off with that stuff he'd stole an' hidden safe. He says he'll kill me. He's full of hop. You got to come ashore, Sam, an' tell him I'd nothin' to do with it. See! You got to tell him you an' me wasn't anywhere near where he says I was. I tell you, Sam, if you don't come I might just as well drop over the side into the river. I'm scared. He's told the police about that business with Morgan in Cardiff."

"An' you think I'll come ashore after

that, then?"

"You'll come, Sam, though you hate the sight of me, because you know if you don't Spike will knife me."

"Serve you right, you twister!"

"I'm not a twister," said the girl indignantly. "For God's sake, Sam, do something decent for once. Take a risk. I ain't said nothin' about how you run away from me. You can go your own way. I ain't stoppin' you; but you got to keep that devil, Spike, from knifin' me."

The sailor indicated the Bishop by a jerk

of his thumb.

"Who's this bloke?"

"Him!" The Bishop guessed that the girl had forgotten his existence. "Cliff-Jones sent him along to look after me." She hesitated and then said quicklý, with a rush of words: "That's ol' Fat. He's the new barman at Rafferty's."

"Well, I'll come. But if there's any double-crossin', gal, Heaven help you!"

"Don't be a swine!" said the girl.

The mate spoke from the alley-way of the saloon deckhouse.

"Get out o' here, sharp! I won't lose any sleep if I never see you again, none of you: not even you, Cummings."

IN a kind of stupor, as though walking in his sleep, the Bishop followed the redheaded girl and the sailor, Sam Cummings, through the narrow streets. In his own mind he felt unspeakably degraded by his enforced association with such companions. He was, moreover, wet to the skin. He shivered incessantly. His back and his arms and legs ached. He craved for sleep, for a comfortable bed, for warmth and a hot drink. Rain continued to fall with undiminished fury. The wind howled. The night, unquestionably the most miserable of his life, had turned bitterly cold.

When at last the girl sighed and said, "We're nearly there now!" he wondered how soon he could escape. He had for the time being lost all interest in Cliff-Jones.

He hoped he would never see him again. He blamed him for all his misery.

A large policeman stepped out from under an archway, flashed his lantern on them and said:

"Sam Cummings, you're wanted! Come here!"

· Without a word, the sailor hurled himself at him. They struggled in silence, grappling with each other clumsily.

"Don't let him get his whistle!" said the girl. She hovered around the two men, as though seeking an opportunity to take part in the fight. "If he gets Sam now, the stabbing pain in his left eye, clung to him and pressed his chin against his shoulder to protect himself from further blows.

"Tie him!" he gasped. "Make haste. Tie him!"

Presently the policeman, gagged with the Bishop's scarf, his hands bound with the sailor's leather belt, and his ankles with the belt from the girl's raincoat, lay trussed and helpless on the sidewalk. Sam and the Bishop lifted him into the archway. Then without further delay they turned and raced down the street after the girl.

They reached Cliff-Jones's house in safety,



"'Shut up an' row!' she said. 'Put some beef into it. This rain makes it 'ard enough to see, but I think we're just on top of her.'"

Sam will think it was me. Fat, you got to help. Do something, you fool!"

"Do what?" said the Bishop help-lessly.

And then, aware of the threat to the girl's happiness, certain that her only hope lay in getting this man of hers to Cliff-Jones's house, he darted forward, flung both arms about the policeman, dragged him forcibly away from the sailor and fell with him into the mud. The policeman, handicapped by his heavy overcoat and waterproof cape, managed to wrench his right arm free and hit the Bishop, and the Bishop, sickened by

hurried into the little dark hall and locked the door.

The red-headed girl led the way into the back kitchen.

Cliff-Jones, standing by the table, teapot in hand, glanced up at them as they entered.

"You're just in time for some tea," he said.

On the sofa sat the man, Spike, whom the Bishop had hit. He looked a shade less repulsive now than when he had crept into the room and threatened the girl. His pale, unwholesome face had been washed. He had had a shave. Around his head was a

bandage. He wore a clean collar and shirt and a suit which, though much too small for him, was neat and dry. On his feet were a pair of slippers. His arms were folded across his chest. He stared mournfully from his close-set, sunken eyes at the girl, but said nothing.

"You, Spike," said the girl, "here's Sam.

See him?

"Now, Daisy," said Cliff-Jones. "Please. Better have some tea."

"That stiff sittin' there like a wooden uncle, he said he'd knife me."

"He won't," said Cliff-Jones.

"He said he would. He's a hop-head. You dunno what he ain't. I'm scared of him."

"I ain't gonna touch you," said Spike in a weak voice. "I told him"—he indicated Cliff-Jones with a nod-" I wouldn't."

Sam, a broad young man of about twentyfive, with fair hair and a weather-beaten face,

stepped forward.

Listen to me," he said. "What did you mean by sayin' Daisy give you away to the police? She ain't that sort, but you, you snitch, you are! You went to the police about me, didn't you? They're after me. Well, I warn you, Spike, if they get me, Heaven help you!"

"I didn't know," muttered the man on the sofa. "I thought-" He broke off and sat scowling at the floor. He raised his haggard face. "Was it you hit me?" he said, looking at the Bishop.

"I'm ashamed to say that it was."

The girl turned on him swiftly.

"Don't you be a hypocrick, Fat. Don't start that whinin' over again. Did you want him to kill me, an' you too? You done better work to-night than you think, for all you're so soft an' useless." She spoke to the man on the sofa. "Spike, I ain't seen you look so clean since you come out o' hospital. You're a horrible sight, but you're a human bein' an' not a gorilla thing. How did you shave without cuttin' yourself?"

Again the man nodded toward Cliff-Jones. "He drug me upstairs, he done, an' took off me clothes, an' give me a hot bath an' cut me hair an' shaved me. Then he rigged me out with clean clothes." He sighed and looked hopelessly around the little shabby kitchen. "I dunno; I'm about finished. Me head aches from that thump I took an' I could do with a shot of hop." Again he sighed. "Well, if it's all the same, I'm goin' to bed. I had a hard day."

"You know your way, Spike," said Cliff-

The man nodded, rose unsteadily to his feet, and shuffled out of the room, groping with his hands.

The Bishop shuddered. Never in all his life had he seen so repulsive a specimen of humanity. It passed his comprehension how anyone could willingly lay hands on him, even to clean him.

"What I want to know is," said the sailor, "does that pie-eyed hop-head understand Daisy didn't do what he said she done, or is he going to take it out of her next time he comes to and sees her?" He uttered a hard laugh. "He give me away to the police, he did! But I came ashore because of Daisy, an' now I got to get back on board.

I'm a fool, ain't I?"

"You wouldn't have had me killed, would you?" said Daisy. "An' he isn't the only one I got to put up with. Sal's out to get me. Spike went to her an' said I told the police about that business in Cardiff an' what you done, Sam. She told me to-night as soon as she got me alone, where you couldn't interfere "-she nodded toward Cliff-Jones just in the same way that Spike had nodded—"she'd cripple me. She will, She ain't particular, Sal ain't, ever." She twisted her pale face into a forlorn little smile and said: "That's why I run away from the place I was livin', because of Sal."

"I'll have to see her," said Cliff-Jones,

ànd explain."

"She won't listen," said the girl. "She hates me. She's as bad as Spike. Worse. I'm more afraid of her."

"You're talkin' of my sister," said the

"Well, what about it? Your sister's just about ready to croak me because you got tired of me an' run away from me, in spite of what you promised, an' that awful Spike, for all he's my brother, he's the same. Everyone in the world's against me. I got no friends. Nothin'."

The girl turned and leaned against the wall, her face hidden in her hands, and began to sob.

The Bishop, astounded by the sight of this hard, worthless young girl weeping, and not so worthless, perhaps, dropped into a chair and sat with his shoulders humped, his elbows on the arms of the chair, his hands clasped. And was he fat, he asked himself, and soft? Was the girl right in what she had said? His bare flesh, he noted, showed white through cuts in the knees of his grey flannel trousers. His knuckles were bleeding. He was soft and flabby. He must be.

Sam went to the girl and patted her

shoulder.

"I didn't mean that, Daisy. Honest. It ain't my fault, though. You did rile me, didn't you, with your goings-on? Honest."

She turned a flushed, tear-stained face on

him.

"Didn't you understand that was only to—to make you care for me? Are you blind, Sam, or what? What would I care for that—that other feller for?"

The young man's weather-beaten cheeks reddened. He drew the girl to him and

kissed her.

"I'll marry you, Daisy."

"If I let you, you got to promise you

won't treat me just like a wife!"

The Bishop, no longer capable of feeling shocked, turned to Cliff-Jones, who still stood by the table, watching the young man and the girl with a look in his grave eyes that puzzled him.

"Then they're not husband and wife?"

"No. I have hopes, though, that they will be some day, if they steer clear of trouble. The girl's afraid. She knows what kind of life wives have in this part of the world."

The Bishop pondered. Cliff-Jones lit his clay pipe. The girl and the young man

whispered.

"Ît makes a difference what part of the world you live in, of course," said the Bishop. "To-night, for instance, I've hit a man. I've helped steal a boat. We couldn't take it back to where we found it, because of the tide. I've helped fight a policeman. We left him tied up in an archway."

"Is that when you got that black

eye ? "

"Have I a black eye?" said the Bishop.
"I suppose it must have been. And you're not shocked?"

"Heavens, no! Why should I be?

You're learning."

The Bishop did not understand. Pre-

sently he said:

"You know why I came to see you. I'd heard stories." He paused and frowned, and then went on again, slowly and ponderously, remembering his office: "It's difficult to judge, to distinguish between right and wrong, to say what a man may do without offending and what he mayn't do. I'm no bigot. I understand, but others don't. Between ourselves, speaking now as one man to another, is it wise to give your

opponents an opportunity of casting stones at you?"

Cliff-Jones, seated in a chair opposite, ran his fingers through his sandy hair with an impatient gesture and sighed.

"I'm afraid I don't follow you."

"Do you think it right that a clergyman of the Established Church should mix with the dregs of the water-front, people such as I've seen you with to-night?"

"I don't know about the dregs!"

"Is it wise to allow yourself to be known as the associate of thieves and loose women and drug fiends and people of that stamp?"

Cliff-Jones leaned back in his chair and smiled in such a kindly way that the Bishop felt rather young and foolish, almost as though, he reflected, their respective positions in the Church had been reversed.

"I don't know about being wise," said Cliff-Jones, "but the best man I know had as his friends men and women far worse than the people you've seen to-night. It didn't hurt him, why should it hurt me?"

"But perhaps your man wasn't a Church of England clergyman!" said the Bishop.

"As a matter of fact, he was a Jew," said Cliff-Jones.

"Oh!" said the Bishop. He stared into the red glow of the fire and was silent. Cliff-Jones had taken an unfair advantage of him. He felt humiliated. "I'm sorry," he said. "I've made a fool of myself. I apologise."

"No reason to apologise," said Cliff-Jones. And then he held up his hand, very much in the same way that Daisy had held up her hand an hour or so earlier. "S'sh!

Don't speak!"

In the stillness there came the sound of a

knock at the front door.

"If that's the police," said Sam, "and they've found the copper we tied up, we got to look slippy."

Cliff-Jones rose to his feet.

"It isn't for me to say go or stay. I know you've done nothing wrong, but appearances may be against you." His gaze rested quizzically on the Bishop, who was conscious once more of his black eye and bruised chin and his torn and muddy garments. "I must go and see who's at the door." He paused on the threshold. "By the way, Daisy, I told them you'd be coming along later. Don't be too late, please."

No sooner had he disappeared into the hall than the girl, Daisy, turned fiercely on

Sam.

"The back way," she whispered, "through the yard. You too, Fat. Look alive."

They passed through a tiny damp scullery into a small yard bounded by brick walls. The rain was still falling. The backs of the houses were in darkness.

"What are we going to do?" said the

Bishop.

"Climb the wall," said the girl. "I done it before."

Sam sat astride the wall.

"Daisy first," he said. "Give her a leg up, mate. Then come on after her. And if you make any noise, I'll brain you."

THE Bishop and Daisy said good-bye under a dark railway arch. They had rowed Sam out to his ship and had returned to shore with the boat they had twice stolen.

"You'll be all right, won't you?" said the Bishop. "Hadn't I better see you to

the door of the house?"

"And maybe get spotted by that policeman! No fear." They shook hands solemnly. "You done a good night's work, Fat. You helped me with Sam and I'm grateful. Maybe I'll marry him. I ain't sure. Men are queer. You, now, when I first seen you to-night in that pub, I thought you was the most forsaken stiff I ever seen, but now I know better. See! You're fine. An' any time you get into trouble on your own, Fat, let me know. See?"

"I'm obliged to you for your extreme kindness," said the Bishop. "Do you think Mr. Cliff-Jones was able to get rid of those

policemen?"

"Why, o' course. They eat out of his hand. They know he wouldn't shield no one who'd done anything really bad, a killing or anything, an' Sam ain't bad at all. Spike, he's different. Spike's dangerous. The worst thing Sam ever done was scrapping with that policeman to-night, but it was you done most of the scrapping, wasn't

it?" She laughed. "Well, I got to be going. So long, ol' Fat. Don't be late in the morning, will you?"

She threw her arms about the Bishop's neck and kissed him soundly, then turned and ran off into the darkness under the arch.

THREE o'clock was striking as the Bishop slowly and softly climbed the stairs. He opened the door of his study and blinked in the glare of light.

Soper sat fast asleep by the fire.

The Bishop touched him on the shoulder and he sprang to his feet and stared at him in consternation.

"Good Heavens, my lord, whatever have

you been doing ? "

The Bishop wondered whether the glass over the mantelpiece had ever reflected such a terrible object as he now looked, with his face all over dried mud and his hair plastered over his forehead and both lids of his left eye swollen and purple and his chin bruised and his bare neck revealed by a flannel shirt without a collar. In spite of his exhaustion he smiled.

"But, my lord, you're hurt!" said Soper. "Shall I telephone for the doctor?"

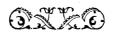
"I'm not hurt," said the Bishop.
"Though, mind you, if I hadn't been fit and strong, I might have been. But I'm tired.
Soper, I could do with a cup of tea."

"I'll get you one in a few minutes," said

Soper.

to Oh, by the way, Soper, you needn't pay too much attention to stories about Cliff-Jones. I like him. I met some of his friends and I like them too. They're the nicest crowd of people I've met for a long time. Lady Hurstwood's a meddlesome old fool, and next time I see her I'll tell her so."

With this the Bishop lowered himself wearily into the big arm-chair and stretched out his legs, in the torn and muddy grey flannel trousers, with the bare flesh showing through the cuts in the knees, and, letting his chin rest on his chest, fell asleep.



THE FACE IN THE **PICTURE**

By H. C. BAILEY 0

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

AKING one thing with another, Mr. Fortune decided that he had better go to Paris. This often happens

In sunshine and limpid air he strolled along the quays. A quick light step came after him, a bulky man drew level; he found himself looking up at the large face of M. Dubois of the Sûreté, a face of renown in the world of crime. "My dear friend! I was sure of it. I knew that back! But you must lunch with me and tell me all your sins."

"Rather. Yes. My wife's in Italy. I want a confessor. Just now I was feelin' strong enough to look at the pictures. What's the Salon like this year?

"Not so bad." Dubois shrugged. "Come,

then, I give myself the morning."

They turned into the Grand Palais. There was the earnest crowd of the first days, working its conscientious way round the walls, taking the duty of criticism seriously. Dubois also began with zeal at the beginning. But Mr. Fortune does not look at pictures like that: and these pictures did not compel his attention. He drifted on. It was in one of the less fashionable corners that Dubois found him again. "Pardon, my friend. I desert you."

"My fault." Reggie looked dreamily at a queer picture. "I was just wandering. Most instructive show. You take your pleasures so seriously in France. I've heard more principles of art than I thought there were." He drew closer to the queer picture.

"What's the rule for that?"

Dubois stared at it, shrugged, made a grimace. "None. It has broken them all." The picture was, on the first glance, a stiff pattern in dark grey and pale yellow, rays of yellow straight up and down in front of sharp angular masses of grey. "A problem

of geometry: illustrated in colour," said Dubois with contempt.

"I wouldn't say that," Reggie murmured. "No. I wouldn't say that." His eyes saw the two colours take many shades in such a conflict of light and dark as comes when the sun is fighting through stormclouds, and the sharp pattern passed into a darkness which had form, the light came from far and in the heart of the light was a face. Very queer picture.

"Conic sections by the two-colour process." Dubois worked on at his joke.

Reggie sighed. "Look at the face." he said.

"I do not know him. He is perhaps the god of the sun."

"It could be," Reggie murmured. Built up of light, the face was a part of the pattern, yet a face distinct, of a Greek beauty, but pitiful with a knowledge of sorrow and kind. "Yes. I wonder."

"What, you wonder why it was painted? Oh, my friend! To be modern, to be startling. Or else it is mad."

"Not quite normal, no. Do you know the fellow who did it?"

Dubois looked at his catalogue. "One named Artus. Maurice Artus." He turned the pages of the catalogue. "Aha. Here is another picture of M. Artus. 'Harvest.' Shall we try?"

"One moment. What does he call this?" "This nightmare geometry? He calls it 'Diversions in Hell.'" Dubois shrugged. "Come, let us see the other."

There was nothing obscure about that, It showed that M. Artus could paint with an easy command of his craft. The man had a mind, too. The picture was in grey tones, but sharp and clear: a squalid farmstead in a barren country, a peasant and his wife harnessed to a cart of sodden sheaves,

old folk, bent and straining. Out of the cunning craftmanship came a hard vision of the ugliness of old age and the misery of its futile suffering.

"Harvest!" said Dubois. "Yes-he has a talent, this young one. I could believe there is nothing of more force in the Salon. Observe, my friend." He began to demonstrate according to the principles of art.

"Yes. As you say," Reggie murmured. "Sort of picture that's painted to say how clever it is and make you wish you had never

been born."

He turned away from the "Harvest," he looked back wistfully at the other picture of M. Artus.

"Ah, that, no," said Dubois, and took his

arm. "Lunch, my friend."

The chestnut trees in the Champs Elysées were lifting their first white candelabra of blossom. Azaleas were golden and fragrant about a little glass restaurant. Dubois took a table in the corner which had the best of their scent and colour.

The asparagus in the buttered eggs was happily set off, yet kept its private charm, and Reggie said so. The Carbonnieux had a fresh vivacity and Reggie drank and

drank again.

"Yet you are pensive, my friend," Dubois protested. "He haunts you with his affected nightmare, that advertiser. It is not worth while. One must confess he is an artist, this M. Artus, though he will stand on his head to make us look at him. But "-the coming of the saddle of lamb interrupted Dubois-" but let us be serious, dear friend."

In grave tranquillity they ate. "Yes," Reggie smiled. "Yes. One of my best days, thank you." He gazed benignant at the sunshine and the azaleas. A woman was coming to the restaurant, slim and graceful in the blue of forget-me-nots. "Yes, the fellow's an artist all right. I think you're wrong about that queer picture. I think he'd felt it all. I did. Sort of mad, struggling puzzle and fight and then the face: beyond it."

"My friend, you put your own mind into his mess of paint. That picture is like the old optical delusion patterns—you look at it long enough and your eyes are dazed,

you see what is not there."

Reggie ate his share of a Parmesan soufflé and sighed at the empty plate and glanced round the restaurant. The woman in blue had a table near. He saw her face fair and full-browed, the face of a child whom womanhood had hurt, but of a constant strength. "No. I don't think so," he said. "It was in the other picture he was playing tricks. He did that just to hurt.

"Well, you do not like him." Dubois smiled. "I agree. But a clever fellow. Let him go. There is nothing such a bore as a clever fellow one does not like."

"No. But I'm not sure I don't like him," Reggie said slowly. "That's what bothers me. I don't get him at all."

The quizzing wrinkles on Dubois's big face deepened. "Ah, my friend! This is the professional habit. To the doctor, all men are ill. To the detective, everything is a mystery. But you are on a holiday. Forget it. And pity me—I go back to my office to make mystery of a simple family murder." He pushed back his chair. I can hear that M. Artus has stolen the tomb of Napoleon you shall know instantly."

"Oh yes. Yes. Thanks very much. I'm at the Lucullus. You must dine with

me. What about to-morrow?"

"But with delight—and also with alarm."

Dubois went away chuckling.

Reggie sat for a while in the Champs Elysées with a cigar. But when it was done he went back to the Salon. The queer picture would not be denied. Some talkative people were looking at it. They found it a droll piece: a freak of modernism: the last extravagance of the cubists: but also it had something of the primitives. "One must confess, my friends, a state of the soul. Certainly a state of the soul." They agreed about that.

As they moved away chattering, the woman in blue came by. She saw the picture, gave it a puzzled look, a weary little smile. Then she came nearer. Her face was white and her lips parted. She bent over her catalogue and the pages fluttered. She looked again at the picture, bewildered, deeply intent, went close, peering at the brushwork, drew back again and stood long with wide, wondering eyes. When she turned away her light grace had gone. She stooped, she moved slowly and vaguely as if she could not see where she went.

Reggie followed her. It seemed to him that she was likely to faint. But she made her way to the outer air and a taxi carried her away. She was staying at some hotel. The name escaped him.

He wandered on into the Bois. It has been suggested by Dubois, a very human man, that if she had not been pretty as a lily he would not have gone into the case. But Reggie denies this coldly.

As he walked under the trees, he struggled in vain to classify the woman. That comFrench, a woman so young and pretty did not often go seeing the sights alone. She looked into the painting as if she wanted to know how things were done; but she was



plexion and that figure were not of any stock French pattern; the hotel address suggested she was foreign, but she was quite at home in Paris by herself, and, foreign or surely not a student, she had the clothes, the air of leisured wealth. She had not come to see the queer picture. She took it on her way round the room and she was looking at it some moments before she found anything in it. She did not know that it was by M. Artus. When she turned up his name in the catalogue it told her nothing.

She looked a sensitive woman, but not a woman to be knocked over by emotions. What hit her? The thing had uncommon power, something more than power; it showed the man's conflict, suffering, mystery in a light of tragic faith that was great or mad. But what was it knocked her out? The face? Some memory? That face could not be in the likeness of any man; it was a vision, an ideal, a dream.

And M. Artus said it belonged to "Diver-

sions in Hell."

Reggie felt inadequate.

On the next day he was in his bath when the telephone rang. Dubois wanted to know if he might bring another man to dinner. "It is an old friend who has happened. You permit? Thousand thanks."

The man whom Dubois brought to the tiny hall of that restaurant which Reggie loves best had a swagger and a pair of fierce moustaches. He might have been a

cavalry officer.

They went into a little room all white and mirrors and the noise of the street faded away. In religious quiet they were served. M. Beaucourt read the menu and his purple face became bland. Reggie made exploratory small-talk and it emerged that M. Beaucourt was a painter. Dubois chuckled. Reggie talked about the Salon carefully and discovered that M. Beaucourt painted fantasies. Reggie remembered, of course: Reggie had been charmed: Reggie praised them with a fine freedom from detail. M. Beaucourt sipped his claret. "La, la la. It is my little trade. You are too kind, M. Fortune. Come, let us not talk of my nymphs. They are too simple, poor children. They are not company at dinner."

The three gentlemen were then charmed by the company of a brill in rich sauce and there was an interval of devotion. . . .

"No," said Beaucourt. "A nymph would be an error of judgment. The eternal feminine leads us to trivialities. M. Fortune lives the life of a philosopher."

"What would you have?" Dubois made a grimace. "He is, after all, English.

He must always be serious."

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow! My nature is to be simply futile, but you carnest officials won't let me be. I came to Paris with such a happy vacant mind and—"

"And so he went to see your pictures, my friend," Dubois chuckled.

"And Dubois was waiting to talk to me about the principles of art. Of course I'm showing signs of nervous strain."

"But no," Beaucourt said. "You wanted

nonsense and you had it."

"In fact, he did not listen," said Dubois.
"He found a mystery. Say, then, he made a mystery. And in the Salon. It is incredible, is it not? But what would you have? Making mysteries for the poor policeman, that is his trade."

"Tell me," Beaucourt said. But poularde Albufera required their whole attention. "Yes, tell me," he exchanged a glance with Dubois and sipped his wine and looked at

Reggie.

Dubois began to expound: "It was that

horror by Artus---'

"Aha." Beaucourt nodded, but still it was at Reggie he looked. "There are two. You mean the one which is not a picture?"

"I wouldn't say that," Reggie murmured,

"would you?"

"His 'Diversions in Hell,' that is what interests you?"

"Yes, chiefly. But taking the one with

the other."

"Aha," said Beaucourt again. "You have the eye, M. Fortune. His 'Diversions,' no, it is not a picture, it is a violence of the emotions. But one must confess the thing makes its effect. The other, the peasants—well, that is something seen."

"Oh yes. Yes. What do you think of

him, sir?"

"It appears that he interests you, this Artus."

They gave their minds to foie gras in a wine jelly.

"Doesn't he interest anybody in Paris?"

Reggie said.

"But yes. He arrives. Without doubt, he arrives. I will tell you. Artus has been a young man with a future this ten years. He has tried almost everything, portrait, landscape, subject. One must say it is perhaps a great talent. What any of us has done, that Artus can do, and the painting is brilliant. Nevertheless——" Beaucourt shrugged.

"He hasn't done anything of his own?"

Reggie suggested.

"Ah, my friend, it is not that at all. Whatever he does is perfectly Artus. He is a strong nature. You have seen his peasants. Very well. All his work is like that. As clever as the devil, mocking, hard. Well,

you conceive, that sort of thing does not make success quickly. Also it makes enemies. But at last he begins to be somebody."

"Yes. I see. Yes. But you said all his work was devilish clever and hard. I'm wondering about this freak picture."

"Aha." Beaucourt glanced at Dubois.

"I don't think it's devilish. You wouldn't call it clever, would you? And people don't seem to feel it hard."

"I—I should call it mad—if anybody but Artus had painted it. But certainly he is not mad. I will tell you. Some time ago he began to show pictures like this—nightmare pictures—El Greco and Blake and all the new crazes jumbled together. We said, the fellow means to show that he can do all the tricks of the wild men also. We chuckled, he hit them off so well. But one must confess it helped him. He sold much better. Certainly he knows how to arrive."

"I see. Yes. You don't like him much."

Beaucourt smiled. "No, one does not like him. He is one of these very clever animals which live their own lives. He came to Paris, a bright fellow—from the south, I think. He was in Leroy's studio. He had soon a little name for his caricatures. Very clever and spiteful. They thought he would be a modern Daumier. But he was not content with black and white. He must paint. Leroy began to tell us he had a young man who could do anything. And at last—here is the great Artus."

"Established, is he?"

Beaucourt shrugged. "He makes money. The critics talk of genius. What would you have? I—I say he is a clever fellow. And you—you are still interested, M. Fortune?"

"Oh yes. Yes. It's that picture with the face. I don't think that's clever. Does

M. Artus live in Paris?"

Beaucourt ate a grape. "Do you know, you are the second person who has asked me that to-day."

"Well, well," Reggie murmured.

Beaucourt smiled. "Permit me, my friend—do you perhaps know Miss Everard—Miss Alice Everard?"

"No. Do you?" Reggie opened his eyes.

Dubois leaned across the table. "Miss Alice Everard—that says nothing to you, my dear Fortune?"

"Well, I thought you two fellows were nursing something for me," said Reggie sadly. "Not quite nice of you." He

shook his head at Dubois. "So this is it, what? You've found a lady in the case. Miss Alice Everard? I never heard of her. Slight? Fair? Like an early Italian Madonna?"

Beaucourt slapped his hand on the table. Beaucourt muttered something about thunder and paper bag, a mild amazed oath. "But it is she! A Lippo Lippi Madonna, yes. And you never heard of her." He turned to Dubois. "Explain me that, then. Is it that he is clairvoyant? You put him before that cursed picture and he sees Miss Everard, whom he has never heard of."

"My faith, it is very possible—by what they say of him." Dubois smiled, but his eyes were serious enough. "A sixth sense, is it not?"

"No, it isn't. It isn't sense at all." Reggie was shrill. "It isn't possible. I saw the woman when I looked at the picture because she was there. And I'd seen her once before. She was the woman in blue in the restaurant, Dubois."

"The devil! I remember," Dubois cried.
"I said to myself she has had things in her little life, that one. Well, and then you went back to the Salon—to this horror of a picture again—it is wonderful how that holds you, my friend—and she was there looking at it. Well! Afterwards?"

"It hit her. It hurt her. I thought she was going to faint. But she got away. That's all."

"And what do you deduce from that, my friend?"

"Well, I should say it made her remember something in her life which was rather ghastly. But it wasn't M. Artus she remembered."

"Was it not?" Dubois cried.

Beaucourt smiled. "After all, you do not divine everything, M. Fortune. It is a little comforting. Yes, she finds herself very interested in Artus. She has come to me asking for an introduction. I do not know the fellow to bring him strangers without warning. I have written to propose myself and Miss Everard. And now I wonder if I have done right. I ask old Dubois here—and he brings me to tell you all about it."

"Oh, she ought to meet him if she thinks so." Reggie opened his eyes. "Why not? Anything noxious about Artus?"

Beaucourt shrugged. "Nothing more than others. It is a vigorous animal, a son of the soil, with some polish but gross. But I would not wish to give him Miss Everard

to eat. You see, I find myself a little paternal. She was once a student of mine. it is perhaps ten years ago; she was then, as she is now, of an adorable delicacy." shrugged. "In the studio she was nothing, a pretty little style, that is all. She took her painting with great earnestness, poor child; she worked long, two years, I think, before she gave up. She was charming in her failure. Fortunately, it did not matter. She is rich. But you will understand that I do not wish to sacrifice her to our Artus."

"No. No. Was Artus about with your

students in those days?"

"Oh, my friend! Not in my studio at least. I have no responsibility for the animal. Besides, she does not know him, that is clear."

"If she wants, she will meet him," said Dubois. "That is sure. She had better meet him in a way that we know of."

"Yes, I think so." Reggie looked at him.
"You don't like it much, either?"

"Not too much." Dubois's big face twisted. "Bah, I tell myself I am an old fool. It is not my affair that a rich woman wants to worship an artist. But there is something devilish in that picture. It hurts, and she wants to be hurt. That is what I do not like."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "There are points. Yes, I'd like to meet Artus, too. Take me to him with her-I'll be

another earnest admirer."

"But with all my heart," Beaucourt

laughed.

"Very well," said Dubois. "In fact, I thought you would. Go, then. Observe these people. It is better you than I. M. Artus will have heard of me. But an English amateur of painting, that does not frighten him. Go."

So the next morning Reggie went to Beaucourt's studio. Miss Everard was there already. It seemed to him that the shocks of the picture had left marks. Her delicate face was more eager, more wistful. Beaucourt introduced him. "My friend M. Fortune, English like yourself, Mademoi-

"Mr. Fortune?" Her blue eyes were wide: it was evident that she had heard of him and his presence frightened her.

"And also"—Beaucourt went on—" an

admirer of the work of our Artus."

"Oh, really? Oh, do you know him?" she said in a hurry.

"A pleasure to come," said Reggie.

"M. Fortune saw that picture of his in

the Salon-the vision of the unseen "-Beaucourt smiled—"his 'Diversions in Hell,' and was much interested, like you, Mademoiselle."

She was white. "That interested you?" She looked at Reggie. "And why, sir?"

"Well, I was curious about the man who could feel like that."

"You thought it was rather a wonderful

"I-I-oh, it-it's very modern, isn't it?" she said faintly, and turned on Beau-

court. "Is he coming here?"

Beaucourt shrugged. "I make my apologies. I have no luck. I wrote to him. There is no answer. I telephone to him this morning. One replies M. Artus left Paris last night."

"Oh-oh well, then. It's no use waiting."

She made for the door.

"But, my child-you must not desert us like this-" Beaucourt tried to be affectionate, but she would not have it, she was gone. "Pouff!" He turned with a droll grimace on Reggie. "It appears we lack charm, my friend, you and I. But, in fact, this does not look nice, eh? She is afraid, the little one, devilish afraid."

"Yes, that was me. Sorry. My mistake. I hadn't thought of that. You see, people in England believe I'm a detective. And

she's English."

"But that child—she has never done any

wrong, I would swear it!"

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "Somebody else is afraid too, you know. Our Artus. He funks meeting her. Or meeting her with you about. Yes. Several little points. It begins to look like a case for the professional hand. I'll go round and talk to Dubois."

"You are right, my friend. Tell Dubois. He is a good fellow. I beg of you, protect that child. I swear it, she is innocent."

Beaucourt was dramatic.

"My dear fellow!" Reggie smiled. "Oh, my dear fellow!"

In his room at the Sûreté Dubois listened to the story with his large face set like a mask. "Very well," he moved at last. "There are only a thousand possibilities. Which do you choose, my friend?"

"No, thank you. Not like that," Reggie "Take the facts. The man's afraid to meet the girl. The girl's afraid of an English detective. Particularly horrified at an English detective being interested in that picture. The only possible inference is that the picture could tell something which the man don't want to talk about to the girl and which the girl believes might set the English police working in a way to hurt her."

"That is clear, yes. But if you can divine what that picture has to tell, then-why,

then you are more than human."

"Not me. No," said Reggie sadly. tells me that a man has been in hell and still believes in good. That's all. pose it told her who the man is."

"The face?" said Dubois. "But no,

the face is not anyone."

"No. Not human, no," Reggie mur-

mured. "God, I suppose."
"And then?" Dubois put up his eyebrows. "You present me the little problem, why does a man paint his god and call it 'Diversions in Hell'?"

"Yes. Yes. I was wondering about that," said Reggie dreamily. "Lots of answers, of course. He was feeling bitter and he jeered at himself. Or the man who painted the picture isn't the man who gave it a title. Or-"

Dubois's big mouth went up at one side. "In fact, the man who painted the picture is not M. Artus. For some time I have been

thinking that is possible."

"Fancy!" Reggie smiled. "Yes. It could be. It don't explain anything, you know."

"Oh, my friend! If she could recognise the picture as the work of some other man, that explains perfectly why Artus is afraid to meet her."

"Yes. Yes. The man whose work she knew being someone who meant a lot in her young life, and also an unknown criminal wanted by the police. Yes. But Artus has been showing pictures in this style some time and it never occurred to any of your other painters to smell a rat. Beaucourt told us the beggar can do anything, and he's watched him from the start. He must know."

"That is true," Beaucourt nodded. "Without doubt Artus has a great talent. One accepts that. You acquit him, then ? "

"Oh no. No. I never acquit anybody till I know the charge. What is it?"

"Aha, my friend!" Dubois rolled back in his chair. "Causing perturbation of mind to the eminent Mr. Fortune and poor old Dubois. That is true, eh? We do not like it and we have seen some things in our time. Unhappily, that is not yet a ground of arrest. What to do?"

"Well, you know, you might find out if Artus really has left Paris." Reggie smiled. "You wish still to meet him?"

"I'm going to meet him-if he's still alive," said Reggie.

"So serious as that?" Dubois put up

his evebrows.

"Yes, I think so," Reggie said. "Somebody's been hurt, being hurt. Somebody else now. After all, that's what we're for, Dubois."

" Who knows?" Dubois shrugged. "These affairs of the soul! Well, one does

as one can." He pressed a button.

The next morning, bathed and shaved but still unclothed, Reggie was drinking his coffee when Dubois came into the bed-"Fie, then. Poor old Dubois, he has done a day's work already. But come. I have a little for you. This animal of an Artus, he is in fact gone. He left Paris the day before yesterday. Exactly as his servant said."

"As soon as he had Beaucourt's letter

about Miss Everard."

"That is not sure. What is sure, he is gone to a little country house he has in

Berry. He is there now."

"Berry? That's round Bourges, isn't it? I like Bourges. Come and see Bourges with me, Dubois." He went to the telephone. He demanded a car, a car for a tour, a big car.

"Me, I am not on a holiday."

made a grimace.

"This isn't," Reggie mumbled, getting into his shirt. . . .

The car made speed through the afternoon sunshine over a bleak and drab flat country where spring had not yet waked the sodden soil, where the few farms were squalid and every creature, human or beast, looked old. "Cheery!" Reggie mumbled.

"It is one of our deserts. The Sologne."

"Oh yes. Yes. This is where he painted his other picture: 'Harvest,'"

The road led down from that plateau to richer land, a wide, dreary plain, and before them the towers of the cathedral of Bourges rose from its hill. Through quiet, quaint streets they came to a little square in the centre of the town and a hotel of solid old comfort. "This will do, eh?" Dubois drank off a glass of syrup. "Rest in peace. I go to report myself to the police."

Reggie wandered away into the town and loitered by the castle house of Jacques Cœur, faithful minister of a king who plundered him and drove him into exile.

Dubois came up. "Aha. That is an

irony. Maître Jacques Cœur one morning he goes out, rich, great, and he comes back never. And see his motto: 'A vaillans cœurs rien impossible.' A great irony, what? To valiant hearts nothing is impossible!" He chuckled. "You do not like the omen, my friend? But do not despair yet. At least M. Artus has come back. He is safe in his house. It is four miles out of the town, in a lonely country place, the quietest, most respectable household. One or two old servants, and monsieur never has company. He lives there only to paint. I think we can leave him to the morning." Dubois winked. "We might see him paint then. A little stroll before dinner, eh?"

Reggie sighed. That is a necessity which he does not feel. But he was in a state of meditation. He let himself be led through the narrow winding streets while Dubois lectured on the history of Bourges and twilight fell. They came to a garden below the cathedral, empty in the gloom of the chilling air. Reggie dragged on Dubois's arm. "Oh, my aunt!" he muttered.

"What, then?"

"Look. That's Miss Everard." A woman flitted through the dusk.

"The devil! Are you sure?"

"Oh, my dear fellow!"

"Pardon. She was alone?"

"Yes. Yes. I think so."

"Come, then." Dubois quickened step. They swung round by a wide open space to avenues of trees and then heard a faint cry, a fall.

When they reached her she lay upon her face, and lay still. Under her shoulder

Reggie found the hilt of a knife.

Dubois spat out an oath. "Before my eyes! Tcha, before my eyes!" He moved quickly to and fro, peering into the gloom. He whistled. The dozing town awoke with clatter and scurry. He snapped orders to panting policemen and came back to Reggie. "She is dead?"

"Not yet.'

"Care for her, my friend. I beg of you, do your possible. My God, I do not forgive myself. This becomes an affair of honour."

"It always was," Reggie murmured. The woman was carried away and he followed her. . . .

Late that night Dubois met him at the door of the hospital. "She lives, then?"

"So far, yes. She may live. I think we've stopped the bleeding. It's been internal, of course. Rather nasty. But she had some luck. The knife seems to have

missed anything fatal. I should say the fellow knew his job, but he was flurried. Probably we hustled him."

Dubois made queer noises. "That—that is all I can do! The woman in the case I work on, I let her be stabbed before my eyes. But I hustled the assassin! Oh, surely that is something. Poor old Dubois!

Go, grow cabbages."

"Yes. Yes. Haven't shone, have we? Warning against pride, this case. Don't tell me I have second sight another time, will you? But speaking rationally, we couldn't know. I did think she might come here after him, that's why I was in a hurry to come too. I never thought she'd be killed to keep her away. Why should Artus kill her? Why should anyone? What is it that's worth her life?"

"Someone is mad, yes. The devil, I should have known it when the thing began with that cursed picture. One cannot calculate what madness will do, no, but one can be careful. It is my blame. I should have had the girl watched. I forgive myself never. Tell me frankly, my friend, is she to die?"

"I can't," Reggie said. "She ought to live. I shouldn't be afraid of the wound. It's her general condition. Shock upon shock."

"She has said nothing?"

"Oh no, no. You won't be able to get any secrets out of her yet. I don't suppose she knows who struck her."

"She would not see him, of course. He came from behind. She may know very well."

"Yes. Yes. She may guess. I doubt if she does; I think she's bewildered by everything—by the picture—by the name of Artus—by this attack. It seems to her the world's gone mad to hurt her."

"Poor little one," Dubois growled.

"Not a nice case, no. What are we doing about it?"

"Aha. Poor old Dubois, he makes no more mistakes. Be sure of that. He is very careful. First, I send a good quiet man out to the house of M. Artus. He is to make inquiries, some nonsense, about burglars in the country. He discovers that M. Artus is already at home. That is almost an alibi, but not quite. He sees also the servants of M. Artus, an old man and wife. He has it from them M. Artus has not been out all day. Quite an alibi if you believe them."

"Yes. Yes. Quite neat. There's a little

medical evidence. The blow was struck with great force and downwards. Her left arm was abnormally dragged back and there was a thread loosened in her coat. I should say her bag was snatched from her."

"Bag-snatching!" Dubois cried. "The devil! You make it a yulgar robbery!"

"I wouldn't say that. No. But it was done for some reason. So on the whole I wouldn't say anything to our Artus just yet. But you might have your people look up his youth."

Dubois laughed. "It is being done, my friend. This poor old Dubois, he does not leave out anything any more. Good night." They had come to their sleeping hotel, but

he turned and strode away.

In the morning, when Reggie rose early to go to the hospital, they told him that Dubois was already gone out. Reggie had come back and was making a second little breakfast before he returned. His clothes looked as if they had been slept in, his large face was pallid, his eyes sunken and dull. "You have been with her?"

"Yes. No worse. That means better. But her life is faint."

Dubois drank black coffee and nibbled at a dry roll. "Well, I have news." He looked

up at Reggie. "Her bag has been found." Reggie smiled. "Oh yes. Yes. I thought

it would be. Where?"

"It was lying beside a drunken vagabond on the Nevers road."

Reggie lit his pipe. "I told you it was taken for some reason," he murmured.

"And very neat, too."

"You understand it? Good. Poor old Dubois, he is so dull. My colleagues in Bourges they also understand it perfectly. It is the usual case. It happens a hundred times a year. It has bored every policeman in France. Mademoiselle was walking alone in the dark; she was plainly rich: this tramp sees her, stabs her, robs her, goes away and gets drunk on her money and an intelligent gendarme runs him in." Dubois shrugged. "What would you have? It is as simple as that."

"I see. Yes. Who is he?"

"Oh, my friend! Who are they ever, these vagabonds? Dirt on the wind. This one—my respectable colleagues do not know him at all. They say he is certainly a stranger. That is bad. What is far worse, he has no papers. We are in France, my friend. Almost every rascal has some papers though they are not his own. But he none—none. He is certainly an assassin."

"Yes. Yes. Well-managed business. What does he say about it?"

"He will say nothing, nothing at all. They ask him who he is; he is silent. They ask him where he got the bag; he stares at it, he is still silent. They say to him it is the bag of Miss Everard; he makes no answer. They tell him that she was stabbed last night in the Place Séraucourt; he will not open his mouth: only he stares."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "Have

you seen him yourself?"

"Oh yes, I was there. It is a small man with a yellow beard and hair. He has a fair skin under the dirt. He is of a fragility. A face not bad, but he has not lived well, the wretch."

"Has he had a doctor?"

"Certainly. The doctor says an alcoholic, a neurotic; but mad, he is not sure, he does not think so."

"Yes. Yes. It could be. And how far is it from where he was found to Artus's house?"

"Aha!" The big face twisted. "He does not seem to you the simple bandit? No, my friend, nor to me. But we do not say that yet to our good colleagues in Bourges. It is three miles. M. Artus has a car. The bandit could have been taken there, ready drunk, in a few minutes. It is easily possible. But also one cannot tell that the wretch was ever in Artus's house. These Bourges people know only of two old servants."

"Nobody knows anything about Artus." Reggie was plaintive. "That makes all the trouble. Your fellows in Paris who are turning up Artus's awful past, you might tell them to look for a yellow-haired little man in it."

"Poor old Dubois! You do not trust him any more. But I have told them, my friend. Come, the examining magistrate is to question our bandit. I have obtained for the eminent M. Reginald Fortune to be present because he desires to study our methods." Dubois made a grimace. "My methods, good God!"

M. Clément, the magistrate, was a bald young man, conscious of importance. He welcomed Reggie to his bare office as one potentate another, careful to acknowledge Reggie's dignity and assert his own. The punctilios took some time. Then M. Clément sat in the seat of power and made a quick change from the majestic to the ferocious. He snapped at Dubois, he barked at his clerk, he roared at a policeman. The

prisoner was brought in and he sat back grinning and glaring. "So. This is the animal. I understand." He waited minutes that could be counted for the terror of his stare to take effect, then rasped out questions

But no answer came. The little bearded man in the dirty blouse stood listless as if he did not hear. He looked with wide dim eyes straight before him at Clément, beyond Clément, at nothing. The torturing voice, the threats, seemed to bring him neither pain nor fear.

"You have no name, you come from nowhere, you work at nothing," Clément roared. "Good. You will be no loss when you go to the guillotine. You hear me? That is where you go, wretch. Attend now. You were in the Place Séraucourt last night." He started up. "It is dusk. You see there a lady, you follow her"—Clément acted it, slinking round the room—"you spring upon her from behind, you strike her so. Assassin! She falls to die." He stopped suddenly, for a silence to be felt, then cried out, "See, her blood is on you!" He pointed to the man's blouse.

But the little man did not look down. He gave no sign or movement, he stood wearily patient, gazing straight before him

at nothing.

"Why do you kill her, wretch?" Clément cried. "She has done you no wrong. What is she to you, this Englishwoman, Miss Everard, Miss Alice Everard?" He stopped again. "If you have a reason to kill her, speak!" he roared. Still the little man was silent, but he shook and beads of sweat came upon his brow. "Bah, you have no reason but to rob her, beast. You snatch her bag and you run away to get drunk. A life is gone that you may be drunk for a night." He waited a moment. "Name of God, what vile thing are you?" he thundered.

The little man kept silence some while more. Then faintly, "Is it finished?" he said.

"Oh no, no, no," Clément laughed. "This is only the beginning, animal. You shall pay, be sure, you shall pay in full. You sweat blood already. Drop for drop, it will come. Speak now, you suffer less."

And then the little man shook his head. "That—that is not true," he said.

"Wait, then." Clément laughed savagely.
"Wait and endure. I am content. Take
him away."

"A moment," Reggie said. "You permit?" He bowed to Clement. He went to

the man's side, ran a hand down his right arm, bent to the dirty blouse and smelt it. "Go, then," he said gently. He came back to Clément. "A thousand pardons. You made the affair so interesting. Forgive me and let me thank you for a most valuable demonstration."

Clément had become again the sublime official. He took these compliments as his due and condescended to ask for more. "Sir, I have perhaps some little methods which are my own. If anything strikes you, pray tell me frankly."

"But it was all striking," Reggie murmured. "In detail and as a whole. Especially as a whole. You have from him all that can be learnt at this stage. But what I most admired was your restraint. You gave the man no hint of your suspicions."

Once more Clément made a quick change. But this was not studied. The stiffening went out of him, he was deflated. "My suspicions," he repeated. "Ah, my suspicions, yes. For example, what were you thinking of?"

"Well, you know I'm not very quick. I didn't understand at first. But when you asked him everything—absolutely—except the one thing which is crucial"—Reggie beamed—"ah, my friend, that was masterly."

A horrid uncertainty could be seen troubling Clément. "And your one thing, what is that?" he cried.

"But of course you have it in your head.

Where did he get drunk ?."

"Where did he get drunk?" Clément repeated and tried to look mysterious. "Ah, that indeed. You conceive at this stage I desired not to suggest to the animal that was important."

"You are right. It is marvellous, is it

not, Dubois?"

"Most marvellous, my friend."

"We are fortunate that the affair has come before M. Clément." And Reggie bowed and they all bowed. "My dear sir, when I came into the room I expected that you would find it an ordinary case of robbery with violence. But your acuteness has divined a crime much more subtle." Reggie contemplated the bewildered Clément with reverent admiration. "Tell me, what first suggested that?" But Clément could only struggle to look knowing. "Ah, the mind has its own secrets. Perhaps it was when you saw this fellow has not the strength for the blow that was struck."

Clément jumped at that. "As you see.

he is a poor animal. I put it to you, M. Fortune, as a surgeon—

"Oh, of course. He couldn't. But you are so quick. You divined at once the question is who is behind him. You have made your preparations for him to let us know that. My dear sir, a most brilliant piece of work. I make you my compliments. And also permit me to thank you. You have put us on the track of the villainy which my friend Dubois and I are come from Paris to seek."

"I—I shall be most happy," Clement stammered, and stared with vacant eyes and open mouth. "I do not understand."

"There is a mystery around this poor lady. She has some enemy who fears her. Who he is, we do not know. What is the cause of his malice, we cannot tell. But as you see, he does not shrink from murder. And it is M. Clément who has shown us how we may discover him. Again I thank you."

"Sir, sir, the honour is mine. But how,

then? What to do?"

Reggie smiled. "Oh, my dear sir! I am not quick, but I see the plan you have formed. It is admirable. This fellow, he is not himself the assassin, and, in fact, we have yet no evidence that he knew of the crime. But he is frightened almost out of life. If you let him loose and have him followed, he will lead us to his hiding-place, to his friends. And then—then we have him and them. Tell me, do I guess right? That was to be your way?"

Clément smirked. "In fact, I must confess, something of this sort I had thought of. It is a great pleasure to co-operate with a mind so brilliant as M. Fortune. Come, then, I let the wretch out and you,

Dubois-

" And poor old Dubois will do the rest. Yes. I have some of my own men here now. Thousand thanks." He looked at his watch.

"In an hour," said Reggie.

"It is as you please." Clément spread out his hands. And they left him a little dazed

but swelling again.

When they were outside Dubois took Reggie's arm. "My friend, never tell me again that you have not genius. I have seen you handle an official. It is a white day in my life."

"I wanted to wring his fat neck," said

Reggie plaintively.

"I know. I know. One does," Dubois soothed him. "But why do we wait an hour? For you to have lunch?"

"No, for me to talk to Artus."

Dubois put up an eyebrow. "You are sure?"

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap! That's paint on the little man's blouse. And turpentine. The studio of M. Artus is strongly indicated."

Dubois put out his lower lip. "You go

alone?"

"Oh yes. Yes. Don't you stick one of your fat detectives on me.'

"I do not like it, my friend."

"Nor do I. But nobody else can do it."

"Do what?"

"I don't know. That's the trouble. Good-bye."

Artus's house stood off the main road, at the end of a furlong of lane running between cherry trees. It had a scrap of a park about it, small lawns and many shrubs; it was a surburban villa trying to be a country house, in the style of the Third

Empire.

The door was opened to Reggie by a fat old man with whiskers and a green apron. He thought M. Artus could receive no one. M. Artus was much occupied. But reluctantly he let Reggie into a drawing-room where neither the furniture nor the air had been renewed for generations. A pinched old woman with a black moustache came in and sniffed and clattered away. After some time the man appeared again and announced that the master was in his studio. He led Reggie to a building in the grounds like a barn.

Artus was working at a picture, a picture in the same strange style as that with the face." This also had a geometrical pattern, but of different colours, a clear blue and faint red and gold; it was a happier thing, but without unity yet. Artus had still to bring something out of the wet paint in the

middle.

He turned. He was a big-bodied man, very dark and ruddy. "M. Reginald Fortune? You come all the way from England to see me? I am honoured."

"Well, I was in Paris. I saw your pictures in the Salon, M. Artus. I was

very much impressed."

"I compliment you on your taste, sir," Artus smiled. He had thick lips which showed red and pulpy. "And which of my pictures does M. Fortune prefer?"

"You have in fact a marvellous versatility. But I was most interested in your 'Diver-

sions in Hell.'"

Artus looked ugly. "A sensitive mind?"

Artus sneered. "And so you come from Paris to Bourges to find the painter. Enchanted to make your acquaintance,

or this or that. All the world is mine. You like these pictures that give you emotions. Look, then. I do them when



M. Fortune. And are you buying it?"
"I wonder if I could go the price."

"Fifty thousand francs," said Artus quickly.

"One pays for the name, of course,"

Reggie murmured.

"The devil! Do you expect not to pay

for my name, sir?"

"I beg your pardon?" Reggie gazed at him with mild eyes. "I was only saying your usual style is so different."

"Do you come to insult me, then?" Artus cried. "I have no little narrow style to paint always the same picture. I am an artist, sir, do you understand? Not a portrait painter, or a landscape painter,

I am tired of the truth. There." He pointed to the painting on the easel

pointed to the painting on the easel.

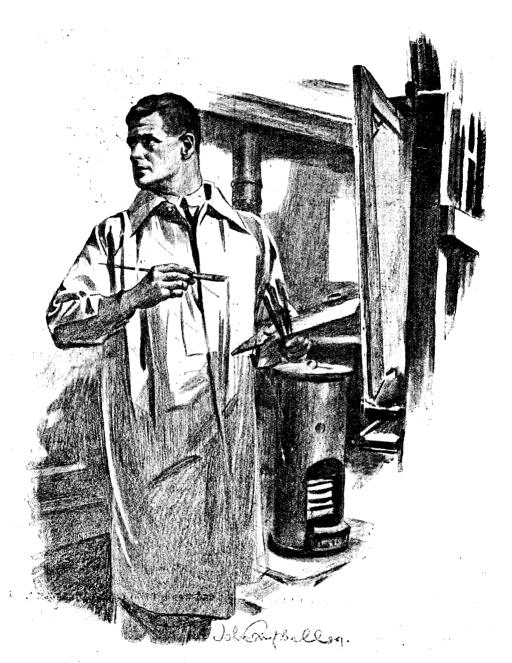
"Not finished, is it?" Reggie went close and peered into the wet paint. "Looks as if it might be rather cheery. Not like the other."

"Cheery?" Artus said fiercely. "I promise you, no. Watch." He began to work on it again.

And Reggie watched. The man knew exactly what he wanted to do and how to do it. His hand was bold and swift. . . . Across the middle of the picture the pattern spread and lost its stiffness and the colours mingled to become like the light in the sky at dawn, and in the light, made of the light,

was a face. . . . The picture was becoming the counterpart of that in the Salon. This face too was visionary, but a satire, a parody "I shall call it 'Faith's Vision.'" Artus laughed.

After a moment, "Oh yes. Yes, I see,"



"Artus turned and saw him and muttered and looked from him to Reggie, pale and furious."

on that other, cruel, contemptuous, jeering. "And what do you call this one?" said Reggie.

Reggie murmured, and watched the horrible face sharpen under his hand. . . .

The door opened softly. Into the studio

came the little bearded man, furtive, slinking, but in a sweat of breathless haste. "Artus!" he gasped, and before he spoke Artus turned and saw him and muttered and looked from him to Reggie, pale and furious. But Reggie's solemn round face betrayed only curiosity.

"What do you want here, vagabond?"

Artus cried.

"What have you done? You shall tell me," the little man panted, and then he saw the picture on the easel with its mocking face. A strange quivering cry broke from him. He dashed himself upon Artus,

clutching and striking.

Artus dropped palette and brushes, grappled with him and flung him off, but he came on again and Reggie took hold of him, "You have done enough, my friend. We will deal with him for you now. Let him be." But the little man struggled wildly, and as they swayed together Artus made at them and a knife gleamed. Reggie broke free to strike at the striking hand, but the stab came into his arm; he was fighting hard to hinder another blow before hands reached up to Artus's throat from behind and he was dragged off choking in the grasp of two compact men.

Dubois strode to Reggie. "Pardon, my

friend. We are too slow."

"Oh no. No. Just the right moment, thanks," Reggie gasped. "Take the beggar away. Nice little job for Clément."

"Aha." Dubois turned on Artus, reluctantly quiescent under hands with no "Be at ease, M. Artus. I am

Dubois of the Sûreté."

" Are you mad, then?" Artus cried. vagabond breaks into my house and attacks me and I defend myself, and I am throttled by your agents. It is an outrage."

"Oh no. No. It's an arrest," Reggie

smiled.

"What is the charge, then?" Artus

"Well, obtaining money under false repretences, attempted murder. I dare say M. Clément will find a lot of little things when he gets going. He can enjoy himself with you." And Dubois waved his hand and Artus was hustled out.

"But the other, my friend," Dubois said gently, with a nod at the little man, who shrank huddled and quivering and watched

Artus go with wide, dazed eyes.

"It's going to be all right for him now," Reggie said loudly. "Quite all right. He'll come into the hospital with me. But one moment." He began to take off his

"Ah, my friend!" Dubois cried as he saw the blood.

"Oh yes. Artus got me. Nothing serious. But if you'll just tie it up. Like that."

"You should not have come alone."

"Yes, I think so." Over Reggie's face came a slow benign smile. "Come along, my friend." He took the little man in his unhurt arm. "I say, Dubois, you might gather in these old servants. They ought to talk."

"Be content. I have them."

smiled. "They shall talk."

"And leave a man here to look after things. Good-bye." Reggie helped the little man away. "There'll be some more pictures of yours about, won't there? We'll see they are all right.

The man looked up at him, a piteous, hopeless face. "Sir, that is not mine, that one.

He has made it a cruelty."

"I know. Yes." Reggie tucked him into the car. "But we'll save the others. And you can make that one right again."

"Never, never," the little man muttered.

"I am finished."

"Make everything come right again," Reggie went on gently. "You see, that magistrate didn't know. Miss Everard isn't dead. She was stabbed by this scoundrel Artus. But we have her safe now."

The man cried out: "It is not true; no,

not true."

"Oh yes. Yes. That's what I'm for.

To find out the truth of things."

"My God! The truth!" the man cried, and his voice broke in hysterical laughter and sobs. . . .

On the next day Reggie came into the room where Alice Everard lay with his arm in a sling. He made his examination of her. "Yes. This isn't so bad. Pain gone, what? Now you're going to do a lot better.'

"I am, yes," she said eagerly. She was looking at his arm. "But you've been hurt

yourself, Mr. Fortune."

"That was a little error of judgment. I met M. Artus and he was rather rash. Not a nice man. Not really a nice man. What do you know about Artus, Miss Everard? Why did you come to Bourges to look for him?"

She blushed. "Why did you?" she said

quickly.

"You're afraid of me, aren't you? You've no reason, none in the world. came to deal with Artus."

"And with nobody else?"

"I didn't know there was anybody else."

"There isn't?" she cried, and her face was white.

"Oh yes, I've found him."

"It was Tom!" she gasped. "Mr. Fortune, where is he?"

"He hasn't had a good time. I have him safe now. How did Artus come to get hold of him?"

"Indeed I don't know. I never heard of M. Artus till I saw that picture. Then I was sure. I was sure there was Tom's work in it. You see, that way of building up the face and that ideal, it was just what Tom used to try for."

"Oh yes. Yes. You knew it was his picture and Artus stabbed you in case you should find him, and stabbed me because

I did. Not a nice man."

"But Tom—you have nothing against him?"

"Nothing in the world. And if I had I think I should forget it." Reggie looked at her gravely. "Would you?"

"I—oh yes—I think so—yes. I don't understand. It was like a mad dream. Only real. It was real!" She shuddered.

"I wonder," Reggie murmured. "You'd better tell me. I'm rather good at seeing

where the trick is."

"Trick!" she cried. "You think—well, listen then. It's nearly ten years ago. I was a student in Paris, I—I came to know Tom. He was a student too, but just finishing. He painted my portrait. I thought it was wonderfully good. I told my people about it—about him. They came over to Paris. I asked Tom to send the picture for them to see. He sent it, only with it he sent a perfectly horrible thing—a spiteful burlesque of me—it was exactly like the picture turned to ugliness—everything weak and poor in me made the most of."

"Yes. Done to hurt. So that was it. Thanks very much. Now we have it. Yes. He knows how to hurt, our Artus."

"It was M. Artus!" she cried. "You

are sure?"

"Quite. Yes. I caught him doing just the same. He can do most things with paint, you know, but his turn is for jeering. Don't you remember, he called that divine face 'Diversions in Hell.' That was what made me curious about M. Artus. I was sure the fellow who painted the face didn't call it that."

"But why should he want to hurt me,

Mr. Fortune? How has it all happened? And Tom——"

"Why? Well, say he was jealous—of Tom's fine picture—of Tom's success with you—and he likes jeering—he likes to show what a devil he is. Quite a lot of men of that kind. How has it happened? Well, you were knocked over, I suppose; you went away and Tom was left with his world upside down."

"I—I was—oh, never mind me. My father was furious. He burnt the pictures. He took me back to England. When I was well again, I heard that Tom had been to our house and my father wouldn't see him. I tried to find out what had become of him. I heard of him in London and people said he was drinking, and he got into some trouble with the police and vanished. That's why I was afraid of you, Mr. Fortune."

"The police aren't worrying about him. He didn't do anything dreadful. Just a drunken row. There has been some drink, Miss Everard. He drifted back to Paris and Artus picked him up, brought him down here and turned him into a studio drudge. Yes, he hasn't lived happy. So he took to painting pictures like the one you saw. Rather a brave soul."

"And M. Artus—M. Artus has been showing them as his own," she cried fiercely.

"Yes. Yes. He won't do that any more." Reggie smiled. "I can deal with M. Artus. But this poor chap—he needs to find life again."

"Where is he?" she said.

"Well," Reggie looked down at her, "it's you who'll have to be strong, you know." He turned away.

When he came back Tom Paton was with him.

The woman in the bed lay watching the door. She gave a cry, her hands were held out to him. The little man stumbled to her side and fell on his knees. . . .

Reggie came out of the hospital and wandered through the tortuous streets of Bourges. At one of the little tables of a café his pensive eyes beheld the bulk of Dubois drinking syrup. He shook a reproving head. Dubois came to him smiling and sprightly. "Be at peace. They have spoken, the faithful servants. Our Clément has had a great day. They will swear anything you please. It is finished with M. Artus. We—"

"I don't want to hear about Artus." Reggie was plaintive. "He's not a nice man."

Dubois agreed with a cheerful oath.

"And those others, poor children?"
Reggie stopped. They stood before the house of Jacques Cœur. "Well, we've brought her man back to her," he said. "And now they've told each other all about it."

"She receives him?"

"Oh Lord, yes," Reggie smiled.
"That will succeed?" Dubois looked at "The man has suffered."

Reggie pointed up at the inscription, "A vaillans cœurs rien impossible." valiant hearts nothing is impossible."

WEARIED.

AM wearied of women and wine, And that is God's truth! I have youth: I will bend it to fine Ideals and deeds: Thoughts noble and kind Shall have birth in my mind.

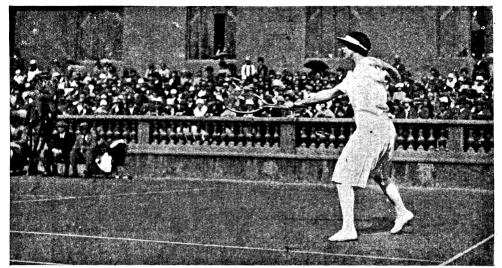
I am tired of men's talk and their praise, And here is my hand! I would stand 'Mid the mountainy ways, Unfriended and lone, Unplagued by the guile Of the City man's smile.

I will go to the dale and the down, The wind and the rain. All the vain, Empty art of the town Shall lure me no more: On a heathery hill I shall wander at will.

I will win to the mountain and sea, The field and the foam: I will roam Where the silver mists be. Like veils on the hills: On the highways of Clare I shall drink of God's air.

I will fare to the folk of the land, And talk with my kind. I shall find My delight at their hand, My home in their hearts. And there, 'mid the hills, I shall sleep when God wills.

LIAM P. CLANCY.



[Wide World Photos.

HELEN WILLS PLAYING A BACKHAND DURING HER MATCH WITH SUZANNE LENGLEN AT CANNES.

STROKES AND PERSONALITIES

By RENÉ LACOSTE

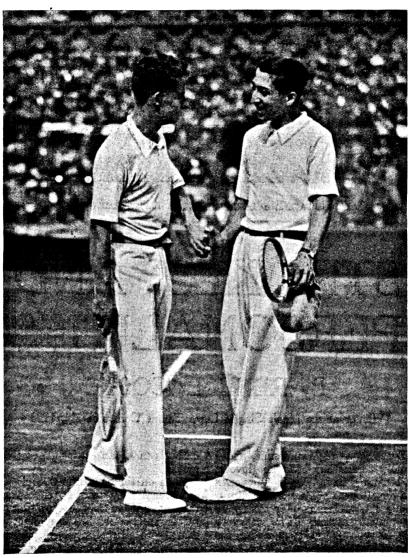
Winner of the Men's Singles Lawn Tennis Championship, 1928

LOVE the game of lawn tennis, and I sincerely think that I do not love it just because I have been lucky enough to win a few tournaments. I like it for itself and I like watching play nearly as much as playing myself. It is not very surprising, if you pause to consider the thousands of people who each year enter the gates of the great stadiums of Paris, New York and London in the hope of seeing good matches. A good tennis match is truly a great thing to see. Think of the day the finals are played at Wimbledon! The beautiful, carefully kept courts, the comfortable stands, the crowd, silent and quiet, or applauding and enthusiastic, the dignified umpire, the attentive linesmen, the clever ballboys, the ball flying from side to side. All the ethics of the game, all the

enthusiasm of an exciting game, a world game!

Then on the court the two players. . . . Sometimes they may be close friends, or they may have met only a few minutes before the match, but they fight just the same, with all their strength, with all their skill, with all their heart! You may know them well or slightly, or you may never have heard of them before, but for the duration of the match you live their life. Even if you have just played a few times in your life your mind works with the mind of the player whom you wish to see winning, when he prepares his strokes, when he hits the ball. You try to understand his tactics, you study his temperament. Your pleasure is never spoilt by monotony, because there is an incredible variety in the strokes, in

the tactics, and in the personalities of great tennis players. When you have studied and admired Cochet for an hour, wait until Borotra comes into court and you will find everything different and a new pleasure to experience. Studying a great player seems tennis players, mostly because I wanted to understand how they were producing their best strokes in order to reproduce them, and because I wanted to know exactly their weak points physically and mentally in order to know how to beat them. Cochet.



[Sport & General.

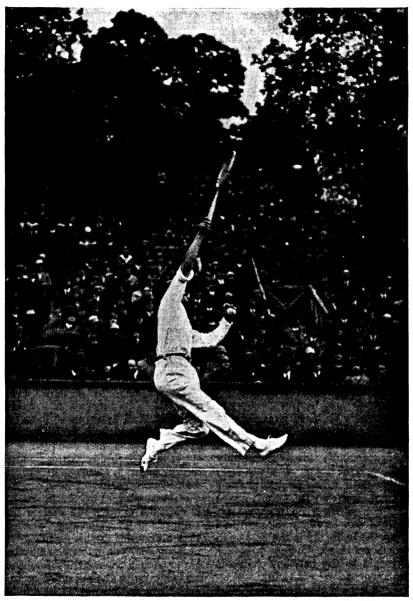
H. W. AUSTIN AND RENÉ LACOSTF.

to me exactly like reading a good book. The one thing gives you the desire to read another book, and the other the desire to study another player, to watch his strokes and to understand his personality. Of course I have spent many hours studying the strokes and personalities of great lawn-

Tilden, Borotra, Miss Helen Wills, Miss Betty Nuthall, how they act in court, what they think in court, has been for me a profound and pleasant study; and it is an equal delight for me to analyse my own French contemporaries and my friends from overseas. Let me tell you how I see their

strokes and how I understand their personalities.

First among men players of to-day is Henri Cochet, the little man from Lyons who has several times won the championship the Davis Cup Challenge round. Although he is rather small, Cochet is a magnificent athlete. He has in his muscles the three great qualities, speed, strength and lasting power. In my opinion Cochet's best stroke



[Photo-Rol, Paris.

HENRI COCHET SMASHES!

of France, who won at Wimbledon in 1927, and who is the present holder of the American Championship. His crowning achievement, however, was in Paris last year, when he won all three matches which he played in

is his smash, which he plays decisively from every point of the court. Cochet is short, and when he takes the volleying position he comes very close to the net and yet it is practically impossible to lob him.



[Topical.

MRS, MALLORY AND BETTY NUTHALL.

He runs back very fast, very easily and accurately. He places himself right under the falling ball and he literally crushes it down into his opponent's court. Technically speaking, the pace of his smash comes from the perfection with which Cochet controls his equilibrium, and also from the way he tenses his muscles when he prepares his stroke, and the way he freely relaxes them while hitting the ball. As is the case with all the great smashers, Cochet does not impart any spin to the ball but strikes it with a flat racquet.

Next to his overhead play, just as effective but not as orthodox, is Cochet's forehand. His forehand grip is quite orthodox in itself, being half-way between the old English school of the Dohertys and the modern American one. He strikes the ball with a flat racquet, the forearm and the handle of the racquet being in a line. The remarkable thing which everyone notices in Cochet's forehand stroke is the shortness of the swing, the racquet being hardly brought one foot behind the shoulder, and the fact that his elbow hardly leaves his side. Even at the instant when he strikes the ball Cochet does not fully extend his arm, and yet he imparts terrific speed to the ball and places it with a marvellous accuracy.

If Cochet has a faultless smash and a marvellous forehand, he has a service which is faulty and generally weak, and a backhand which is unreliable. One day Cochet's backhand is a very good stroke and the next day it is a very weak one, because one day Cochet places his feet correctly, and the next day, through laziness or lack of confidence, he does not place them correctly. There is something fundamentally wrong in Cochet's service: he strikes the ball too low, too far behind his head, and is not able his to control stroke very well. Add to this

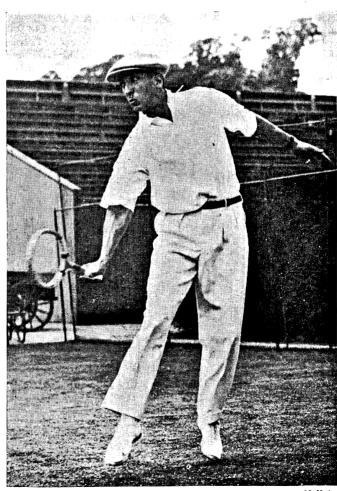
the fact that he is not tall and that he does not know how to impart any kind of spin to the ball and you will understand why Cochet serves generally a weak second ball. With a weak service and a rather weak backhand how can Cochet be the best player in the world? Simply because he is what we call in France an "opportunist." The day when he feels that his service or his backhand is really working very poorly, he manages to outpace his opponent with terrific forehand drives, and he goes to the net as often as he can; and there at the net, although he strikes the ball in a way which is not always orthodox, he is the master of the masters. There he anticipates, he kills, every shot which is not perfect, and . . . he wins! I am strongly of the opinion that if Cochet had not a few technical weaknesses, he would be absolutely unbeatable! Cochet's personality is not very striking on the court; he generally seems lazy and indifferent and to be playing that day just because he is used to playing every day; but sometimes when he plays a great match all becomes different, he is on tiptoes, he smiles or he is worried, he is confident or in despair, and he fights! Then he becomes the idol of the crowd, and is, for the time, the great, the overwhelming champion. Two days later he is again the lazy Cochet.

Helen Wills holds among the lady players the same position as Cochet holds among the men. Since Suzanne Lenglen left the amateur ranks, Helen Wills is undoubtedly the best lady player in the world, and actually holds the French, English and American titles. There is nothing striking in the way Helen Wills plays a backhand or a forehand, although her backhand carries unusual pace. She simply hits as hard as she can, imparting

just a little bit of top spin to the ball. Helen Wills does not vary her game much, and generally she just outruns her opponents by playing from side to side. There is something very peculiar in her attitude on the court, she hardly supports her racquet with the left hand, and this makes her swing seem to be lacking in free-She has a beautiful service, simple and effec-At the net she plays well, but she does not play as well as from the back of the court. Her personality is to the onlooker quite mysterious; she always seems to be thinking of something else than tennis. She never on the seems worried Personally I think that Helen Wills has a very strong and interesting personality, and I feel that she knows what she wants and that she has great will power. does not, however, let anyone understand her feelings, and in the ability she has of concealing these feelings she expresses a great personality. I am at least sure of one thing,

she is most charming and modest and popular everywhere.

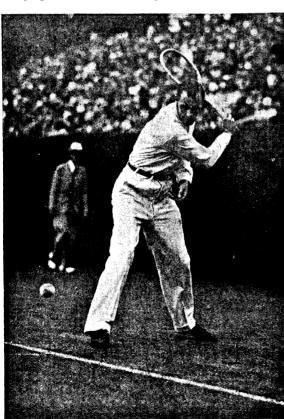
Among the lady players who come just after Helen Wills I must speak of Señorita D'Alvarez first, because for two years in succession she was a finalist at Wimbledon, and because her play is exceedingly brilliant, and her personality really fascinating. Although she does not seem strong, Señorita D'Alvarez is a marvellous athlete. She skates, she skis, she dances as well as she plays tennis. And she does all these easily, smiling freely, and making everybody who watches her happy and also smiling. Technically speaking, Señorita D'Alvarez has very beautiful and orthodox strokes. Her game would be perfect if she were a little less careless and a little less daring. tries the most difficult strokes without ever concentrating carefully on the game; she



[L.N.A.

hardly looks at her ball. . . . And she succeeds! Like Cochet among the men, she strikes the ball very early on the rise with a flat racquet and she imparts great pace to the ball. Her service is ordinary, her volleying is rather unorthodox but very brilliant. Sometimes she is beaten by players who are not in her class, but she does not care. She plays for the love of the game, and everybody likes her personality, her naturalness, and loves to see her on the court.

Betty Nuthall did not play very well last year. It was a disappointment, not only for her but for everybody. But wait and you will see. Last year she was changing her service, and she was worried by all the newspapers discussing her new stroke. You will see what she will do soon. Betty Nuthall is a typical English girl, simple, straight, modest, quiet and always the same, charming and full of pep and energy. She is very strong and she hits nearly as hard as Helen Wills. From the back of the court she prepares her strokes very carefully and



[Wide World Photos.

TILDEN STARTING A BACKHAND STROKE.

very early, leaving her racquet at a standstill for the fraction of a second at the end of her backswing. Her forehand drive is her best stroke; it carries speed and spin, and she placesit very accurately. Her backhand is very fast but a little less reliable. Her volleying is good and will become very good. Her service was effective but unorthodox at first. She is changing it and soon it will become a good stroke. Betty Nuthall has a marvellous timing, and she wants to work and become a champion. She will succeed.

Miss Bennett played better than Betty Nuthall in 1928. She is a lovely English girl and her smile is not less charming than that of Helen Wills or Señorita D'Alvarez. She has a beautiful game, a fast service, a very good forehand drive, a strong backhand, and she plays very well at the net. There is only one thing which prevents her from being the equal of Helen Wills or Señorita D'Alvarez; either because she lacks confidence or because she does not realise exactly what is happening on the court, she often

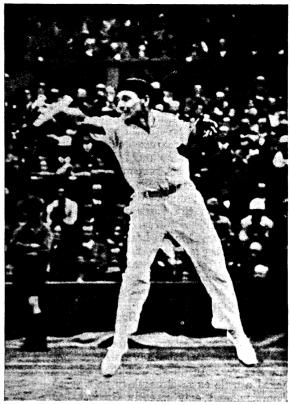
reduces the speed of her strokes during a match. She always seems hesitating between aggressive and defensive tactics. But nevertheless she is a charming girl to watch on the court, graceful in every one of her attitudes, and after all, though it is of course important that a player should win the match, it is also important that a player should please the onlooker by reason of the perfect form of her play.

Among the men Jean Borotra the same position that holds Señorita D'Alvarez has among the lady players. He is the most spectacular player ever seen on a tennis court! He runs, he jumps, he dances, he falls down, he is never still for one second as long as he is on the court. He is faster than anybody else, and he is never tired. He plays a game of his own, always hurrying to increase the speed of his game. He serves and then rushes to the net. He returns his opponent's service and already he is back to the centre of the court, ready to take the next stroke. Technically all his strokes seem unorthodox, but in fact most of them are quite sound and reliable. He always hurries so much

that his muscles never have time to finish their work freely and quietly. For this reason his game lacks the polish some others have. but his grips are orthodox, his footwork is generally good, and, except when he serves, his swing is good. Borotra's best stroke from the back of the court is his backhand. He pushes the ball with all the strength of his arm, forearm and wrist, and imparts great speed. His forehand is less reliable; one day it is good, one day it is erratic. Borotra's service is effective, but it cannot be said to be natural or orthodox, and it is certainly very tiring. Borotra makes a terrific effort for a result which is good but could be much better. At the net Borotra is His smash is nearly marvellous. as good as Cochet's, but it is not such a beautiful and neat stroke. His volleys, both backhand and forehand, are marvellous. Borotra's wrist seems to be made of steel; with a short swing and a peculiar flick of the wrist, the "Bounding Basque" imparts great pace to the ball. Borotra's personality is overwhelming! Mentally he is what he is physically ... a man whose

activity is unbelievable. On the court he smiles, he shakes his head. He is worried, he is happy, he is careful and then careless, he is courageous, he is generous, he plays a daring game, he thinks out carefully his tactics, he plays the fool, he is great. . . . He is all that and many other things. It is never-ending fun to watch him. He seems to act, but he is sincere, and he is a great friend, a delightful opponent, a marvellous sportsman. After all this you can easily understand why all the girls faint when he loses, why all the men like him and envy him. There is only one player who draws a crowd round a court more than Borotra: it is Tilden.

Tilden is a phenomenon. Physically he is extremely tall but remains fast and supple. He has more perfect strokes than any other living player. His service is marvellous, a fast cannon-ball first which often scores outright, all possible because Tilden is very tall, strikes the ball very high, and because his swing is very well controlled. If he misses his first ball the second ball carries a lot of spin and is very difficult to return



[Wide World Photos.

BOROTRA JUMPS AND KILLS.

accurately. Tilden's backhand and forehand are played in the same style. He strikes the ball very low because he stays generally far beyond the base line, and he imparts to it a slight top-spin. Tilden's footwork is marvellous. He likes to play someone who hits very hard. The faster the ball comes towards him, the faster he returns it. Tilden's passing shots and lobs are in my opinion the outstanding features of his game. Several times I have seen Borotra coming on to the court to play him. full of energy and strength, and before the end of the first set being unable to reach Tilden's cannon drives, having been obliged to run backward time after time to chase lobs. Borotra had no more courage left to go to the net. . . . He was beaten! Tilden's defeats during the last two years have been discussed everywhere. Some people think that he has no more strength to get through a great struggle with a young man. It may be true, and after all one cannot have been for six or seven years absolutely unbeatable and remain unbeatable. But I think there are still many great

victories ahead of Tilden. In my opinion the strength which he lacked was not physical but mental, and if he trains carefully, and plays fewer matches, he will be able to beat every one at Wimbledon this year! I was rather sad on the day on which Tilden beat me last year in Paris. It was the first Davis Cup Challenge Round match played in Paris and I wanted to show my best in my home city. But I was pleased to see Tilden win, because he is a great sportsman and I admire and I like his personality. He may be temperamental, but he is a good sport. He is sincere, he is courageous, he is human. Some people say that he acts on the court more than he plays, but this is not true. He loves the game and places it in his heart higher than any other player. I do not understand when I have sometimes heard people say that they do not like Tilden, but I very well understand why so many people like to see him on the court.

Now let us speak of two English players who are soon going to make history. They are Gregory and Austin. Since the War, England has not produced any real champion. But last year Austin showed that he just lacked a little extra strength to be a great champion, and only recently Gregory has won the championship of Australia. While

I am writing both of them are on their way back, and with the experience gained during their tour they ought to do great things this summer. Gregory is older than Austin and much stronger. How can I describe his play? Very simply: he just hits the ball as hard as he can! His strokes are good. Although he does not play as well at the net as Borotra, he reminds me of our "Bounding Basque" in the way he hurries himself on the court. Gregory is a very nice boy. He has a very attractive demeanour on the court and he is quiet and modest. I would like to see him do all that English tennis expects of him. Austin is very young and he is not very strong. He has very good ground strokes, a fairly good service, and he knows exactly how to produce a decisive volley. He is more a Cochet than a Borotra, and he plays a very easy, fluent and accurate game. He does not win because he has good strokes, but because he knows how to use his strokes. His is a clever game, and one feels when one sees him playing that there is something behind his forehead, and that every one of the shots which he plays is part of a well-thought-out plan. hope that Austin, who is very popular, will become stronger within a few years, and then he would be perhaps a worthy successor to the Dohertys.

MY FLOWER.

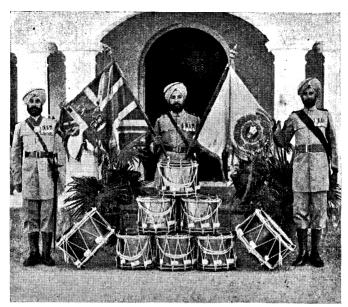
THERE'S the gold of a buttercup field, And the gold of the gorse on the lea, And the golden glow at the close of day, But it's the gold of your hair for me.

There's the blue of the summer skies,
And the blue of the dancing sea.

Forget-me-nots blue, and "Love in a mist,"
But it's the blue of your eyes for me.

There's the pink in the heart of a rose,
And the pink on an almond tree.
The little blush clouds of early dawn,
But it's the pink of your cheeks for me.

Sweetest and fairest and best,
Pink, blue and golden, all three,
But the lovely soul of my Flower
Your pure white lily heart for me.
MAUD GARRINGTON.



[Herzog & Higgins. COLOURS OF 1st BATTALION FEROZEPORE SIKHS (KING GEORGE'S OWN).

THE ROMANCE OF THE INDIAN ARMY

By MAJOR J. T. GORMAN

ONOUR and honours: the words sum up all the valour, glamour and romance of the East in their reference to the fighters of the Indian Army.

The "Izzat," the "honour" of his regiment, is as dear to the Indian soldier as the "honours" bestowed upon it for particular occasions, the special privileges which often are so curious and so full of dramatic and historical interest.

It is a story illustrated with pictures in brilliant colours, this of the honour and honours of the Army of Hind, that Eastern weapon in a Western scabbard, forged from the untempered metal of the irregular levies of the early days.

As far back as 1683 "John Company"

found that troops must be employed to protect the trading interests which had brought the English to India. But it was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that Clive, Stringer Lawrence and others—partly emulating the example of Dupleix in the French settlements—set to work to mould and shape the magnificent fighting material ready to their hands.

Bombay has the credit of the first well-disciplined native corps, but Bengal and Madras soon followed and the end of the century saw the Armies of the Three Presidencies in being.

The enlistment of the bands of warlike mercenaries who roved the country kept them occupied and out of mischief, and during the successive wars of the Napoleonic period



EARLY DRESS OF INDIAN ARMY.

the new weapon proved its temper splendidly under Lake and Wellesley.

A feature of those days was the troops of irregular cavalry, or Silladars, men who provided their own horses and arms—a system which still prevailed in many Indian Cavalry regiments until ended by the changed conditions of the Great War.

At first the dress of these Siliadar companies caused them to be described as "picturesque bandits"; but by 1825 Bishop

Heber could speak of the "neat uniform and soldierly appearance" of Skinner's Horse, who served as his escort through India.

By this time also the Company's infantry were uniformly attired in scarlet coats, white pantaloons, and shakoes of black cloth over a metal frame. The question of economy entered into the adoption of this somewhat unsuitable tropical equipment, as we find rather naïvely expressed in the Honourable East India Company's records.

"The adoption of a uniform of Europe cloth is advocated," the entry runs, "to give a more martial appearance and to take off a very considerable quantity of Woollen Goods."

Still some distinction was needed when fighting against other native troops. At the battle of

Wandewash, in 1760, Eyre Coote had been obliged to order that the whole Army, "both European and Black," were to wear green tamarind boughs in their hats or turbans, as well as upon the Colours, in order to distinguish them from the enemy.

It would seem unbelievable if, in the British Army, a regiment still claimed to possess Harold's standard, taken by the Conqueror William at Senlac. Yet that ancient Indian Cavalry Regiment, the Poona Horse, are allowed to carry officially, as a special honour, a standard which dates back to the very year of Hastings, 1066. This standard was taken by the regiment at the battle of Khooshab in 1857, and it is surmounted by a silver hand, with the inscription on the palm, "Yad Ullah Fauk Idehim,"—"The Hand of God is above all things."

A similar trophy is carried by the Scinde Horse, who captured their famous "Meeanee Standard" on February 17, 1843, at the battle of that name near Hyderabad. They were fighting under Sir Charles Napier against the Baluch Army—2,000 against 18,000 odd—and it was a most gallant charge of the Scinde Horse which finally won the three-hour battle, and won also for them the enemy's dark-green standard, surmounted by the silver "Hand of the Prophet."

Napier valued the Scinde Horse highly, calling it his "old Advance Guard," and to commemorate this the regimental trumpet-call is still the "Advance Guard" call of the 1840's.

The early regimental Orders of this corps

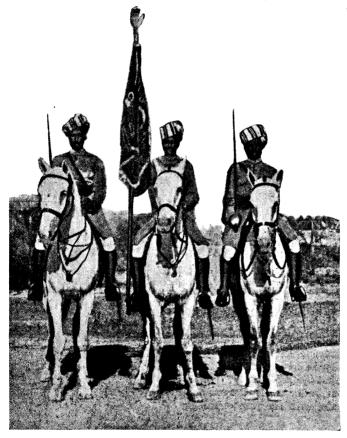


INDIAN CAVALRY OFFICER (PATHAN) IN FULL DRESS.

make quaint reading, as when a Sowar, or trooper, is blamed for having displayed "disgraceful and unsoldierlike conduct" by thinking fit when on duty with the quarter-guard to remain at his prayers when the rest of the guard fell in. As the Orders put it: "Soldiers are not placed on guard to say prayers; otherwise they had better become fakirs; men who have the fear of God in their hearts show it best by doing their work properly."

"romantic bravery" and "the most brilliant affair ever achieved by any Army." Yet these phrases were used, and were not overpraise, for the deed which earned for the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Bombay Grenadiers their especial title of the "Grenadier Regiment."

The battalion already possessed the outstanding honour of the Sphinx for Egypt, 1801, when, barely five hundred strong, and accompanied by some two hundred and fifty



ESCORT OF THE POONA HORSE WITH STANDARD SAID TO DATE FROM 1066, THE YEAR OF THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

The Scinde Horse received a distinction to celebrate their services in the Great War when His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, visited India. For he did them the honour of becoming their Colonel-in-Chief.

Gardner's Horse, another famous regiment, received an honorary standard, learing a lion, for Sind, 1844.

It is an exceptional honour for a regiment when official despatches use such terms as of the Poona Horse, they threw themselves into Koregaun, near Poona, and there held up the entire Army of the Peishwar, Bagee Rao, described as being 28,000 strong.

With little food, water or ammunition, the small force fought on for a day and a night, losing heavily in everything but courage and determination, until the Peishwar, who had himself been watching the battle, withdrew, asking bitterly: "Where were his commanders' boasts of defeating the English



[Kinsey.

A PIPER OF THE 10th BATTALION 18th ROYAL GARHWAL RIFLES.

when they could not overcome one Black Battalion?"

Later, in the Great Mutiny, Subadar Gunga Singh, of the same regiment, showed such wonderful loyalty in saving and hiding a British officer that he received a "khilat, or robe of honour, a fine white charger, and an estate in Oude, with the title of Sirdar Bahadur."

There is something romantic and magnificent in that list of honours, as also in the title bestowed upon another splendid Subadar of an earlier day, the friend and right hand of Malcolm and of Wellesley himself. This was Cawdor Beg, of the 4th Light Cavalry, who received the title of Cawdor Nawauz Khan—Cawdor, the favoured Lord.

The deeds of these Subadars have been matched in our own day by that of Subadar Isar Singh of the 1st Battalion the 14th Punjab Regiment. This regiment was engaged in 1918 against the Bolsheviks in Turkestan, with scarcely any support except untrustworthy local levies. Fighting against tremendous odds and reduced to half its

original strength, the battalion was obliged to retire temporarily, and, as all the British officers were casualties, this difficult movement was carried out most admirably by Isar Singh without the loss of any wounded or a single prisoner.

Although this Subadar Major of modern times may not have received the picturesque tributes of his comrades of old, he was granted a still more highly-prized honour, the King-Emperor's commission.

A grand story is that of the 1st Battalion 7th Rajput Regiment (Queen Victoria's Own Light Infantry), once, in the days of John Company, the 2/15th Bengal Native Infantry.

They possess one of the rarest of military honours, the third, or honorary Colour, always bestowed for especial valour, and in their case earned under Lord Lake at Delhi in 1803, and bearing the inscription, "Lake and Victory."

Two years later, the siege of that so-called unconquerable fortress, Bhurtpore, saw the first act of a most romantic drama. The



[Kinsey.

SUBADAR MAJOR (HONORARY LIEUTENANT) 10rh BATTALION 18th ROYAL GARHWAL RIFLES. attack had failed, as so many others were to fail during the next twenty years, but the regiment behaved very gallantly and planted their colours on one of the bastions, where the colours were so riddled and torn with shot as to be condemned shortly afterwards. But instead of burning them as ordered, the Sepoys tore the colours to ribbons and preserved those sacred shreds until, in 1825, the regiment once more found itself under the walls of Bhurtpore.

At a critical moment in the attack the shreds of the old colours were produced and tied to the new, whilst the Indian soldiers

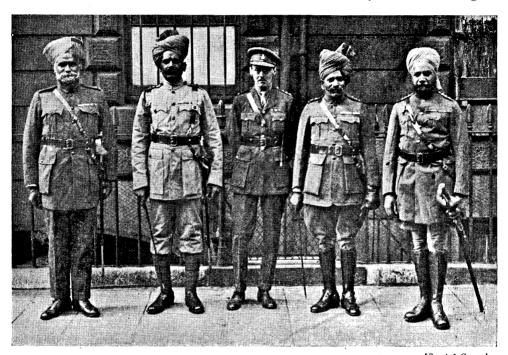
the gateway, surmounted by the English flag which is never hauled down, day or night, and they bear the resounding title of "The Regiment of Lucknow," to commemorate those days when, in Tennyson's fine words, the Indian soldiers:

"Fought with the bravest among us and drove them and smote them and slew-

That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India flew."

The story of Bhurtpore is only one instance of the enormous veneration in which their colours are held by Indian soldiers.

The first honorary distinction ever given



[Sport & General.

A GROUP OF HIS MAJESTY'S INDIAN ORDERLY OFFICERS, WHO COME YEARLY TO ENGLAND TO TAKE DUTY CLOSE TO THE PERSON OF THE KING.

solemnly vowed to be worthy of their comrades who had died in defence of the battered fragments.

They kept that vow, and those torn shreds of the old colours are still preserved in a crystal and silver casket and form the centrepiece of the dining-table in the officers' mess.

To the 10th Battalion of this same 7th Rajput Regiment belongs another and a very glorious honour. They are the "Bailey Guard Paltan," formed from the faithful remnants of the 13th, 48th and 71st Bengal Native Infantry. They wear the badge of

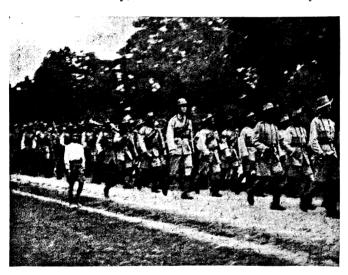
to an Indian regiment was in 1767, when the 14th Battalion of the 10th Native Infantry received the name "Amboor Battalion" and the right to "carry Colours suitable to the occasion."

From the earliest days the regimental oath was taken by the recruit standing in front of the Colours; and so important is this custom still held to be that the 6th Gurkha Rifles preserve and use for swearing-in recruits the regimental colours of the 42nd Assam Light Infantry, their original unit. And this although, as a Rifle regiment, they do not themselves carry colours.

It is a remarkable fact, and nowhere more remarkable than in India, that the races conquered by British arms have proved themselves again and again Britain's strongest allies. The braver the foe, the stauncher the supporter, as may be seen in the records of those gallant fighters, the Sikhs and the Gurkhas.

The Sikhs, whose name means "disciple," are wrongly described as a race; they are really a warlike religious sect, founded in the sixteenth century. A Sikh's surname is always "Singh," or Lion, and he must wear the five K's: Kes, or long hair; Kangha, a comb in the hair; Kirpan, a distinctive knife; Kara, a plain steel bangle or quoit; and Kachh, or short drawers.

The Sikh battle-cry, "Sath Shri Akali!"



GURKHAS ON THE MARCH.

—"God go with us"—has been heard again and again in the crash of battle, even down to our own days on the Western Front in France, and the British never met a worthier foe than the Khalsa, or Sikh Army, defeated finally in 1846 at Sobraon.

From that same Khalsa, whose spirit was never conquered, were formed the Sikh battalions of the Indian Army, and of all the Sikh regiments none has more distinguished itself or won more honours than the 1st Battalion, the 11th Sikhs, the Regiment of Ferozepore.

The faithfulness of the Sikhs, so recently our enemies, was invaluable to the British when the devil-wind of the Great Mutiny swept over India.

During the second defence of Lucknow

the battalion garrisoned the Bailey Guard and lost severely in the terrible street fighting. For their splendid services General Havelock promoted each man in the regiment a grade higher, and gave all Subadars the First Class Medal of the Indian Order of Merit.

The staff of the Regimental Colour was broken in this Lucknow fighting, and still displays the honourable wound in the brass band surrounding it, which can plainly be seen in the photograph of the Colours. Those same Colours display a wonderful array of battle-honours, including one which is unique, the "Defence of Chitral."

Other very valiant foes and friends are the Gurkhas, who, when praised for their valour by British comrades after a battle

in 1825, returned the compliment with: "The English are as brave as lions; they are splendid troops, very nearly equal to us."

This was no mere vain boasting; one might call it a plain statement of fact, for these small, sturdy Highlanders of Nepal have few superiors in battle, and they have been entirely faithful to the British Raj since Sir David Ochterlony conquered them in 1815.

The 2nd Gurkhas, the Sirmoor Rifles, in 1857 actually demanded that the famous "greased cartridges" might be issued for their use, so

that they could thus prove their loyalty. For this outstanding staunchness, and for their especial services upon the Ridge at Delhi, they had the unusual distinction, for a Rifle Regiment, of carrying Colours, like infantry, and were given as well an honorary third Colour, inscribed "Delhi."

In 1863, to take the place of these Colours, thus bringing them into line with other Rifle Regiments, Queen Victoria devised and presented a truncheon, to which the same honours are paid as to the King's Colour.

Yet another quaint battle-honour the Sirmoor Rifles possess, won in 1824, when the battalion demolished the Ghurree of Koonjam, a dacoit stronghold, where eight hundred desperate robbers were entrenched.

With their kookris, the Gurkhas cut

down a huge tree, and, slinging it on ropes, used it as a battering-ram to break down the gates of the fort. To commemorate this feat the civil authorities presented the regiment with a battering-ram, which is still preserved in front of the quarter-guard at Dehra Doon, the Sirmoor Rifles' regimental "home."

An honour of great significance among Indian regiments is that which is borne by the 2nd Battalion 2nd Punjab Regiment, whose men were the first Indian soldiers in 1796 to volunteer for service overseas, although this involved that serious step, the breaking of their caste.

For this "readiness always evinced" to go on active service, they were given the badge of a Galley, with the motto in Persian "Khushki-o-tari," meaning by land and sea.

The name "Kelat-i-ghilzie" is the outstanding honour of the 2nd Battalion the 2nd Bombay Pioneers, who earned it most gallantly in 1842 in defence of the fort of that name. Besides the title, the Battalion received a special regimental Colour, in the hues of the Indian Military Medal ribbon, red, yellow and blue. This single Colour,



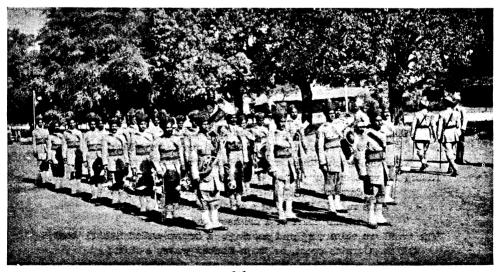
[Central News.

SEPOY ISHAR SINGH, OF THE 28th PUNJABIS, NOW JEMADAR 4th BATTALION 15th PUNJAB REGIMENT. THE FIRST SIKII TO OBTAIN THE VICTORIA CROSS.

carried on parade, is unique in the Indian Army.

A very memorable honour was bestowed upon one cavalry regiment, the Deccan Horse, and seven infantry regiments, after the Great War in 1921, in the shape of the title "Royal," with the added distinction in some cases of wearing a Tudor crown on the shoulder-strap, and a scarlet twisted cord round the shoulder, on the right arm.

Among these newly created "Royal Regiments" was the 39th Garhwal Rifles (now the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles),



BAND OF THE 2/2 PUNJAB REGIMENT.

hillmen again, whose "pipes" are one indication of that curious kinship with other Highland races.

The 47th Sikhs, too, at about the same time, were honoured for their "distinguished services in the field "by becoming the Duke

of Connaught's Own Sikhs.

Something which distinguishes both the Regiment and the individual is the position filled by the four Indian Orderly officers who come yearly to England to take duty close to the person of the King, and to appear in that capacity near His Majesty at many of the brilliant functions of the Season.

One of the Indian Orderly officers last year belonged to a regiment with an interesting history and an interesting nickname, the "Kali Panch Regiment," the "Black Fifth," so called to distinguish it from the "White Fifth," the Northumberland Fusiliers. The Kali Panch Regiment has an especial honour of its own, for it was created a Light Infantry unit in 1841 as a reward for services in Scinde. In earlier days still they had yet another nickname, for they were called the "Kanta Wallai," or Bead People, because they were with their uniform a resary of white beads.

For War service, the 1st Royal Kohat Mountain Battery received the title "Royal" —a reminder of the honours and distinctions won by Indian Gunners from the first times of the Company. In those days, contrary to present usage, the Artillery carried Colours, sometimes upon the leading elephant of the gun teams.

Such Colours were used as a kind of rallying-point, as appears from the answer given by the gallant Stringer Lawrence in 1750 to Monsieur D'Auteuil, the French Commandant, who asked in what part of the army of Nasir Jung the English forces were to be

"The English Colours were on the flaggun of the artillery," Lawrence answered. If Monsieur D'Auteuil looked there, he

would discover the English."

It is only since just before the Great War that Indian soldiers have been eligible for the greatest of all military honours, the Victoria Cross. It was won by them on all fronts-in France, in Mesopotamia, in Waziristan, the first Sikh to obtain the Cross being Sepoy Ishar Singh of the 28th Punjabis, now Jemadar 4th Battalion 15th Punjab Regiment.

We have had space only to glance here at the Roll of Honour of the Indian Army.

To record all the great deeds, all the distinctions written there, would fill volumes, rather than a few pages, for Sikhs and Jats, Rajputs and Pathans, Dogras and Punjabis, Baluchis and Gurkhas, all these and many others distinguished themselves.

We have spoken of the early times, of the regiments which distinguished themselves in the first days of British rule; the same spirit, the same loyalty and the same inspiration are found in the newest of all the Indian forces, those hill tribesmen of Burma, the Kachins, who, as a newly raised force, volunteered for service in Mesopotamia in the Great War. There they won many honours; there they adopted and shouted as a slogan on the battle-fields of Irak the war-cry, which sums up the aspiration of the Indian Army from first to last, "May the Kachins have Honour for ever!"

COUNTRY LOVES.

THE things I love ?—O God, I couldn't tell you in a day The things I love; there's the smell of new-mown hay; The purple glory of heather-covered hills,

The black-bird as his song of praise he trills; The woods in Autumn and Spring; the pearly mist Rising in wave on wave, the valley the while being kissed By dancing winds; the way the larch-tree grows;

The mystical sight of a wet rain-drop

In the heart of a crimson rose.

The swallows skimming and soaring; a brown-sailed fishing boat Off the Cornish coast, on foam-flecked waves a-float;

The smell of the earth after a shower of rain; the blue of the sky above; These things with other of God's delights are some of the things I love."

W. D. HOLDSWORTH HUNT.

MR. BUFFUM BUYS A NEW CAR

By HUGH DE SÉLINCOURT

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

•

R. BUFFUM was driving, without his handy lad, Monnie, alone to Worthing, when suddenly he heard an ominous crack, startling as the crack of a lamp-glass which an ominous silence followed. The engine had stopped. The song is ended, but the melody lingers on: and the car sped along the level until Mr. Buffum applied the brakes and drew up cautiously by the side of the road, pleased at his foresight.

Then one thought and one only filled his mind and all his consciousness: the wish, the immense wish, that Monnie was with him.

Monnie would have risen to the occasion as to an adventure. But this was the sort of adventure which Mr. Buffum had himself long and thoroughly outgrown.

He pulled out his cigarette-case and thoughtfully lighted a cigarette. People would think that he had paused to admire the view. An A.A. man might pass on his bicycle. He ought to know what had happened: he knew only that he had not the remotest notion. But he tried to look upon the bright side. It was not raining: it was a lovely spot to stop in: he had a comfortable seat in which to sit and to smoke and to admire the view. He hesitated to press the self-starter, anxious not to make bad worse by injudicious experiment. He disliked amateur assistance, however kindly; it was apt to be rash in method and loquacious in question.

No A.A. man appeared: his pensive cigarette was burning short. Something must be done. He boldly pressed the self-starter, but heard only a light whirr, meaningless and disconnected as some bright women's talk. He got out, opened the bonnet, and looked wisely and vacantly at

what he could see of the engine. Plenty of juice: that he knew for certain. It all looked just as complicated and inexplicable as ever. The marvel really was that it should ever propel him happily along the roads: not that it should decline to do so. For Mr. Buffum's awe at the intricacies of an engine had increased with use.

His general experience of life told him that in any given emergency there was usually one correct course of action and countless wrong ones. He sate and waited hopefully for the one correct course to emerge. He yearned for the reassuring presence of Monnie as a lost child for its parent. In the near-by village there would surely be a telephone.

A very few steps away from the car along the road gave Mr. Buffum the comfortable sense of being a mere pedestrian—a rôle he was able to fill with assurance; he was no longer a motorist in difficulties—a rôle too conspicuous to be pleasant for a man of his retiring nature.

It was an agreeably fine morning and Mr. Buffum enjoyed the half-mile's walk into the village; an approach he always felt to be delightful. He found the phone without difficulty, and at the other end Monnie was fetched without much delay, who, panting and excited, pressed eagerly for precise details. A snap, going at twenty-eight—the engine stopped . . . A sound, half whistle, half sigh, greeted this information.

"I'll come with Mr. Charman: we may have to tow her home!"

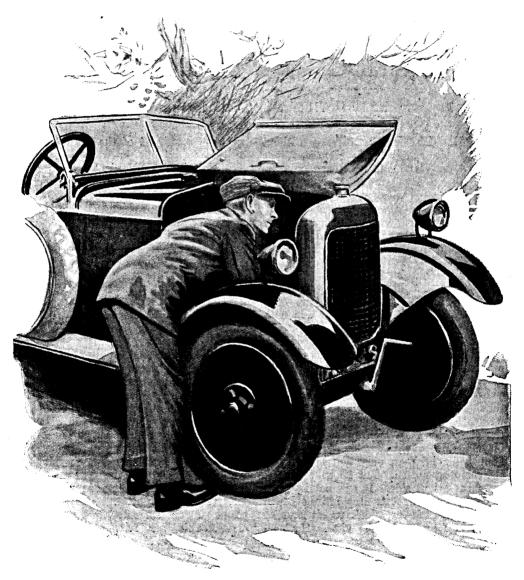
Mr. Charman kept a garage in their village: he had done many jobs for Mr. Buffum, but the more important jobs, such as decarbonisation, had been done by Mr. Thomas, who kept a larger garage in Wor-

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thing. Now Mr. Charman had, a few weeks back, made an alarming report upon Mr. Buffum's car: he had found a crack in the engine frame, which might widen: a flaw in the back axle: and unsoundness in the springs.

he had spoken to Mr. Thomas, who laughed and said: "Oh, she's every bit as good as when you had her: these old buses run for years, you know."

He had said to Mr. Thomas: "Well, if you see a coupé, more shut in, not too



When Mr. Buffum, much distressed, had urged for a definite pronouncement to his simple question, is she unsafe to drive?—he had been met with uncertainty and hesitation—she might last a month or two, a year or two, she might conk out to-morrow. For some days after this sad report he had driven with extreme caution, uncertain which minute would be the next. Then

expensive, you would take this in part exchange . . . ? "

"Certainly, certainly!" cried Mr. Thomas.
"They are always coming my way. Why, only yesterday, the very thing . . ."

Mr. Buffum thought of this with some dismay as he walked slowly back to the dear derelict, his steps involuntarily slowing as he approached her: not that he was really ashamed of a valued friend now that she was in trouble: he was not paltry enough for that. He remained, however, at a diffident distance from the car, leaning on a gate, within view, contemplating the scenery, pondering on the hopeless aspect and deceitful at continuing to admire the peaceful prospect, but he could not bring himself to exhibit his ignorance before a stranger.

The A.A. man rode on:

"All right, sir?" he called out.



"'There was a loud snap and the engine stopped,' said Mr. Buffum, anxious to exculpate himself."

of a car that will not move, waiting for Monnie, to whom he gave a full hour at least.

He saw, out of the corner of his eye, an A.A. man pause by the car. He felt guilty

"Quite, thank you!" Mr. Buffum smiled back, as at a kind inquiry after health.

Eleven-forty-five. He was doing well. He had escaped all embarrassing attention so far. Why should he not stroll along for a glass of beer at the inn? A capital idea. He was back again at his convenient gate by twelve-fifteen, refreshed and fortified with a good pint, and at any moment now Monnie might arrive with familiar helpers.

Somehow Mr. Buffum felt that he ought, if he were a right-minded motorist, to be grovelling under the car, black with oil, wet with sweat, full of zest and purpose: he ought not to be thus quietly enjoying an enforced rest by the roadside: it was feeble and undignified, he was sure.

An eager shout from an ancient Ford disturbed his meditations. Mr. Charman and his mechanic were there, and Monnie. Mr. Buffum pointed and walked towards the dear derelict. The others were on her like terriers at a rat-hole. Solemn headwags followed Bill the mechanic's effort to crank her up.

"There was a loud snap and the engine stopped," said Mr. Buffum, anxious to exculpate himself, "while she was travelling at twenty-eight miles an hour."

The sad verdict was pronounced, almost at once: "Something radically wrong! We'll have to give you a tow home."

The ancient Ford was twiddled with absurd ease (almost disrespectful, Mr. Buffum thought, considering her obvious age) into place before the dear derelict, a towing rope was speedily attached, while instructions were given to Mr. Buffum as to the manner of steering a towed car: which Monnie took in with open mouth, and to Monnie Mr. Buffum tacitly and gladly resigned the driver's seat, disliking novelty of experience as profoundly as the boy welcomed it.

It is not a joyful business being towed, unless, like Monnie, it is your only chance of holding the wheel on the open road. The sympathy noticeable in the glances of those passing in untowed cars, though it may not be openly derisive, hardly seems wholly pure.

The eight-mile drive to Mr. Charman's garage was all too long for Mr. Buffum and all too short for Monnie. On arrival Mr. Charman jovially announced that they would inspect the damage after dinner and let Mr. Buffum know, adding, much to his bewilderment, "She mayn't be worth repairing," and kindly bidding Bill drive them the mile home in the ancient Ford.

There followed a period of perplexity such as Mr. Buffum had never before in his life experienced.

It began with Mr. Thomas ringing him

up on the telephone, full of solicitude about the accident of which he had been told. Mr. Buffum at first was pleased and grateful: it seemed friendly and nice of Mr. Thomas, who was a comparative stranger, to take such an interest. He almost said so in as many words: indeed he was choosing them in his mind when the conversation took a horrid turn—"I shall probably have to fetch the car here: but of course my man will bring tools up: the trouble might be slighter than we think."

Mr. Thomas was a ready talker and his voice flowed happily on, so that Mr. Buffum hadn't the heart to break the flow and the

facts to him immediately.

But at length he blurted out the guilty announcement: "The car's at Charman's garage in the village, you know."

"I did not know. How should I?"

No one could see the drawn uneasy smile on Mr. Buffum's face. "I don't know how you could possibly know of the breakdown," murmured Mr. Buffum in tones that should have mollified a dragon.

"Two men saw you being towed home."
There was a silence. Mr. Buffum was unable to confess to his yearning for the presence of Monnie.

"Of course you understand the position. Don't think I'm trying to snatch a job. I've got far more than I can comfortably do. Indeed my men work till eleven at night and we've had to turn away countless jobs with far more profit to them than—well, your car's not exactly new. But I am always anxious to oblige customers and I've got my hand on the very thing, as you spoke to me of a small coupé—but how can I possibly tell what to do with regard to part exchange if your car is in the hands of another man?"

There was an awkward silence. Then in gentler tones Mr. Thomas said: "Perhaps if you were to dispose of her privately in your neighbourhood you would get better terms." Thankful for the fading crossness, Mr. Buffum hastily agreed, then added: "Of course: I don't yet know what's wrong with her."

There followed a fluent discourse on Mr. Thomas's method of conducting business wholly in the interest of his clients, unlike many who were out for immediate profit, and who were often most unscrupulous in attaining their end. Many telling instances were given. Mr. Buffum became anxious only for the end of the conversation, which at length came; and he retired, a much-

troubled, much-bewildered man, to his chair by the fire for rest.

He had time to fill a pipe before the phone bell rang again. It was Mr. Charman, who announced: "We've found your trouble. The timing wheels are broken."

"Oh!" said Mr. Buffum, and waited

for further particulars.

"I say the timing wheels are broken."
"Ah!" said Mr. Buffum, and seeing Monnie through the window by which the telephone stood, frantically beckoned for him to come.

"It's Mr. Charman," he informed the "He says the timing wheels are bov.

broken. You speak."

"What's that mean?" shouted Monnie, as though he felt his voice must reach Mr. Charman in the village unaided by wire. Mr. Buffum stood anxiously by the hall door, feeling guilty at backing out of a difficulty. He watched the boy's eager anxious face and was so absorbed by the sight of its troubled intensity that he did not hear, as he would otherwise have done, the sound of approaching footsteps on the brick pavement outside.

The rapping on the door made him jump. He opened the door. There stood Captain Jackson, the admired of Monnie, as he had once sat in a racing car at Brooklands. Mr. Buffum stepped out on the bricks with his visitor, not to disturb the phone conver-

sation upon which his fate hung.

Captain Jackson had heard of Mr. Buffum's trouble with the car, and instantly rallied round to help with his experience. Mr. Buffum was so much touched by the kindness that his consuming desire to be let alone seemed harsh and ungrateful. Captain Jackson had a bright and forceful manner, which Mr. Buffum felt he was horrid to hate. He knew his own mind, too, and had decided to drive Mr. Buffum that afternoon into Horsham and possibly on to Dorking to garages where he was quite at home, and fix his friend up with another car immediately. It would simply be pouring money down the drain to spend it on repairing that old bus.

His words did not rouse that sweet reasonableness with which Mr. Buffum liked to receive the well-meant opinions of others. On the contrary, he knew that the only car he ever would or ever could drive was that same contemptible old bus, his proved friend, his loved niece's exquisite gift. Quite a little storm began to rage in his mind, and might have burst on Captain Jackson, had not Monnie rushed out and attention to an incoherent outpouring distracted Mr. Buffum from his wrath. gathered that repairs would cost anything up to ten pounds, always supposing the part wanted for so out-of-date a car could be obtained at all. Captain Jackson became voluble and insistent, and from the fog of bewilderment in Mr. Buffum's mind emerged one certainty only-that of Monnie's longing for a drive in Captain Jackson's Bentley. This weighed with him far more than it should. He felt both cunning and deceitful in accepting Captain Jackson's offer for such a reason, as he knew quite well that he had no intention whatever of buying a car under the good Captain's auspices.

The result of the drive was a huge success from Monnie's point of view: he had passionately appreciated every snappy change of gear, every swift get-away. From Mr. Buffum's point of view, however, the drive's success was qualified. He found himself involved with two more garages, and another kind persistent friend urging him to make up his mind, which in a state of complete ignorance is never easy. He felt as though unseen hooks had been fastened deftly into him and that he was being pulled in various directions by strong

unseen hands.

He knew all about his bicycle—he eyed it wistfully as it leaned sadly against the wall -rusted. flat-tyred, disused, rejected. Why had he ever allowed himself to be bitten by the mad motor-craze? He would never be a real motorist: he could never again ride his bicycle with satisfaction, a bicycle that had yielded him such loyal service for so many years. In a really good car he could get to London well under the two hours. Fob off these confounded madeovers. . . . He'd show them . . . and make an exhibition of himself flaunting in a grand car at his age, when he ought to be pleased to have a bicycle to ride and the strength of limb to ride it. Far healthier, too, than riding in a mechanically propelled vehicle. There was indeed something distinguished, aristocratic even, in these days when every tradesman owned his car, in pedalling quietly along on his unhurrying way. It might be a little sweaty perhaps on a warm day, and not very good for the trousers of his blue serge suit, but a man should move within his own orbit, a man should have a soul above comfort and appearance, a man should . .

No wonder, with such high thoughts

uplifting him, Mr. Buffum should utter a deep sigh of genuine regret that never under any circumstances could he take to a bicycle again. He'd rather—hang it!—walk, or—he gave a bitter laugh—propel himself about like a child of one.

But he was still in the thick of his trouble, which daily, almost hourly, increased. It was, of course, his own fault entirely; and he was well aware of it. He asked for advice, and when a man asks for that commodity he undoubtedly gets it.

"Now tell me, what would you do in my case?" he said to Mr. Charman with touching frankness. "Knowing nothing about cars, I find it difficult to make up my own mind as to what is the best course to take."

Mr. Charman, a little irritated as Mr. Buffum had allowed Mr. Thomas to tow the dear derelict to his garage, looked him up and down and answered:

"A Weedon would suit you down to the ground."

Monnie, who was with Mr. Buffum, uttered a yell of rage, and the boy's hoarse cry, added to Mr. Charman's manner, hurt Mr. Buffum like a subtle insult, though the name Weedon conveyed as little to his intelligence as did Monnie's bitter remark, when he had recovered from the shock: "Our dog's well trained."

Mr. Buffum made the mistake of replying not to the words spoken, but to the crossness behind them. He said:

"I really thought you meant it wasn't worth your while to waste time on my old car."

At which Mr. Charman merely snorted. Mr. Buffum was grieved to realise that he was offending others without gaining any help for himself.

The phone bell never ceased to ring, and when he went out for a long walk to avoid its painful clamour, he returned to find, in kind Eliza's illegible scrawl, a list of people for him—please to ring up immediately: and that list lengthened.

One man pointed out that "running in" a new car was not a novice's job, and insisted on the marvellous value to be obtained by a man in the know among, say, shop-soiled vehicles: the next man raised his eyebrows merely in contemptuous comment at such optimism. One man insisted that it was better to buy a first-class make, however ancient, than a cheap car, however new. Each as he spoke convinced Mr. Buffum's ignorance, until

the conviction was upset like a ninepin by the next speaker.

Mr. Buffum became desperate, as the number of men to whom he became committed—Leave yourself in my hands, old fellow, I'll fit you up all right—increased in number. He seriously considered leaving the country and settling for good in the North of Scotland or the South of France. Anyhow, even if he ever got a car, there would be no garage within a radius of twenty miles to which he would have the face to take it for attention. And in his despair he bethought himself of Niece Lucia, who was really responsible for his distress. Who else had lured him from the narrow way? Who else had caused the repudiation of his bicycle? And he could no longer remain carless.

So he sent an urgent appeal for help to Niece Lucia, who swallowed her dinner, drove through the night, and came. She arrived soon after ten, and disappeared at once into the kitchen to mix an insidious drink called Egg Nogg which she declared she needed after her drive. She did not mention that it was a wonderful liberator of a harassed mind, and Mr. Buffum, touched by her instant response to his appeal, was glad to join her in what appeared to be an innocuous glass or two of milk in which an egg or two had been beaten up. noticed a little something else about it; but had no idea with what American generosity this glaxo had been laced with his brandy and lashed with his rum; thus giving body and spirit to his joy in Niece's presence.

He began his tale of woe.

The wood fire before which they sat was bright and pleasant: the sight of Niece was delightful and reassuring. As the tale of woe proceeded, the difficulties diminished and gave gradual place to a strange and growing elation which Mr. Buffum sought to quell by stating firmly that he would never buy an extravagant or costly car. There was nothing so vulgar as ostentation, was there? Niece Lucia, listening with bright-eyed attention, nodded immediate agreement. He went on, disposing lightly of every argument in favour of a madeover or makeshift car, while Niece Lucia waited until the flow stopped and Mr. Buffum in quite a different voice, low, distant and reflective, said:

"I wonder why that boy, Monnie, should have set his heart on a Planet Saloon."

He paused as though hoping for an opinion

on the set of Monnie's heart: but getting none, he spread out his hands, and said, smiling:

blood . . ." He brooded mildly and stopped.

Niece felt her bright eye was reading



"Niece Lucia, listening with bright-eyed attention, nodded immediate agreement."

"So you see I've not the least notion what to do or even what I want. I only know that I must have some sort of quiet, safe and inexpensive car. Having tasted

Uncle too patently. She shielded her face from him and looked into the fire, controlling her voice to say with businesslike precision: "I know a wonderful old bus, a bargain, going for thirty-five pounds. A little shabby and out of date perhaps, but lots of go left in it, still. Lots."

"Ah," said Uncle sadly. "That sounds

the very thing."

"What with the noise and vibration," she continued solemnly, "you really do know you are in a motor-car and not gliding along on your old bike like you do in these new-fangled silent things."

He looked at her questioningly, as his oracle turned a pensive face towards him

and asked:

"Didn't you buy some Celanese at five shillings?"

Mr. Buffum jumped with guilty surprise at this reference to what had been lurking far back in his mind even before the dear derelict's demise and stammered: "Yes."

"They stand at about twenty-two now."

"I know," he faltered.

"How people can drive about in a car costing nearly three thousand pounds beats me. Just sheer abominable swank!" she meditated.

"Awful!" Mr. Buffum agreed. "Awful! Still, I think I might without extravagance go a little beyond the thirty-five-pound mark."

"Your Celanese, then, are worth about a

thousand."

"£1,110 15s. 6d. to be exact."

Niece laughed inside herself and said with a solemnity which a less suspicious man might have found excessive: "I expect Monnie's so keen on Planets because he knows George is one of the main distributors. When George was here the two had many a heart-to-hearter on cars. But of course that mustn't influence you in any way."

"Are you,—forgive me, dear, if I intrude,

-are you fond of George?"

"Yes, very," she answered with immediate candour, which left Mr. Buffum exactly where it found him—in complete doubt.

"As a matter of fact," he began with a plunge, "I rather like . . . that's to say . . ."

But he could not make his own fond confession. It seemed absurd, even wicked, that he should aspire to drive a Planet.

"Yes. I know you took to George," she covered his uneasiness by blandly saying.

"That eleven hundred pounds is simply a windfall," she went on. "Not capital.

I should sell out. A car like a Planet is a safe investment."

"My dear child, you are not suggesting I should have a Planet! Me drive a Planet! Really . . ." He washed his hands and sat up to keep from trembling. To hear the suggestion, distinctly spoken, thrilled him, for he was himself genuinely unaware how much his heart was set on it: indeed, had been set on it after hearing the good George's quiet exposition of its beauties three solid months ago and longer. His diffidence stamped the wish as fantastic and impossible, and increased thereby its potency. Amazing Niece sat opposite to him and coolly described this fantastic impossibility as a safe investment.

"I say, you don't really mean . . ."

She appeared not to notice his excitement, though it electrified the room. She leaned forward and carefully filled his glass with the insidious Egg Nogg, which looked as innocent as stuff to fill an infant's bottle. He drank it smoothly down, though the hand that held the tumbler shook.

"Say eight hundred pounds for buying: that leaves a good three hundred pounds for expenses: tax, insurance, tyres, improvement to garage, and your real capital left untouched. I was afraid you might feel you must launch out and get an expensive car. Sheer madness. What's the time?"

"Ten minutes past eleven."

"I'll ring George up."

Mr. Buffum gasped, and moved his lips like a fish on grass. He would have collapsed, but the Egg Nogg sustained him. He rose from his chair,

"I'll send in those shares for the Bank to

sell. It's no good wasting time."

The note was written, the envelope addressed and sealed; when Mr. Buffum, walking on air, arrived with it in the hall to leave it for post, Niece was still talking on the phone.

So he grasped his Wanderer's Staff and hat and went out into the cool dark night, intent on a plan which, had he not been drunken with excitement even more than with Egg Nogg, he would have instantly dismissed, had it occurred to him, as childish and inconsiderate.

But now Mr. Buffum walked with firm footsteps towards the cottage, remembering that Monnie's room was on one side of the bungalow cottage, his parents' room on the other.

He climbed on to the window-sill of the bedroom: the window was open at the top,

he pulled it further down and, pushing aside the loose curtain, peered over the window into the room. The foot of the bed lay under the window.

"Monnie!" he called out. "Monnie! Don't be frightened, my boy. It's only

me. The Gov'nor."

No sound but deep regular breathing. He never thought for a moment how shameful it was to waken a sleeping child. He was liker Tom Sawyer than Augustus Buffum. He carefully lifted his long Wanderer's Staff over the glass window, and gently prodded the boy's body, repeating, "Don't be alarmed, my boy. It's only me, the Gov'nor."

At length Monnie awoke from his beauty sleep. He mumbled, "All right, coming,"

and, putting his legs out of bed, stood staring in a nightgown which reached his toes. "You! Lor'! 'Elp!"

"I say, Monnie. Yes. It's me. But I say. Listen. I had to tell you. Ssh! Don't make a sound. But we're going to have a Planet!"

Monnie climbed on to the foot of the bed and, peering up into Mr. Buffum's face, whispered hoarsely: "Say that again!"

"We're going to have a Planet!"

"Christmas!" cried Monnie, tottering.
"No, now. Possibly to-morrow. Good night, my dear boy. Mind you go to sleep again at once. Don't tell any-

body!"

And Mr. Buffum hurried back to Niece without another word.

TWO WAYS.

THE broad highways are glaring ways,
The sun in all his strength
Can, blatant, unrebuked now blaze
A-down their curveless length:
Gone are the trees, and in their stead
Stand petrol pumps in packs,
With liveries of searing red,
Like sticks of sealing wax.

The broad highways are noisy ways
And filled from early morn
With varied howls and hoots and brays
From many a motor horn:
Gone are the flowers that starred the banks,
But paper bags are strowed
Most lavishly, while serried ranks
Of cars stream down the road.

The waterways are pleasant ways,

The river croons a song

Beneath her breath on sunny days,

And gently glides along;

The willow herb bends down to hear,

And rushes quivering

With pleasure, also lend an ear,

They love to hear her sing!

The waterways are soothing ways,
With oft a sheltered spot
Where weary souls can rest and "laze,"
Be "by the world forgot."
The broad highways encroach, increase,
In clamour, dust and heat,
But by the river there is peace—
The waterways are sweet!

LESLIE M. OYLER.

WHITHER IS CIVILISATION DRIFTING?

THE PERIL OF A RETURN TO

BARBARISM

By JOSEPH CAILLAUX

formerly Prime Minister of France

Readers will recall an interesting contribution akin to this subject by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in our March Number, under the title, "Is Civilisation Progressing?" It is instructive to compare the points of view of two such prominent statesmen of neighbouring Powers.

IVILISATION! What deeper significance has this word, of which we make use without giving a thought as to its real meaning? As that elegant poet with the mind of a philosopher, Sully Prudhomme, one day remarked in my presence, part of the misunderstandings among men who think is due to their want of attention to the necessity of first defining their terms.

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Define the word civilisation? Is it sufficient to say, as others have done, that the term stands for a combination of agreements patiently elaborated by man to make his relations with his fellows more easy and to eliminate one by one the motives of distrust, envy and fear? I confess that the definition does not appeal to my intelligence. seems to me to map out the outlines, to contemplate the surface instead of delving beneath. I would suggest a definition of greater simplicity and one that, I think, is more incisive. I suggest that civilisation is an organisation both of morality and of material well-being. Such a definitionwhich grasps as nearly as possible a fleeting idea dependent on the changes of timewill not, I imagine, be contradicted.

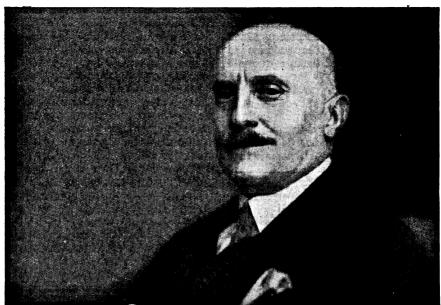
Without too great difficulty an agreement might be arrived at as to what must be understood by the word Civilisation. The expression *Progress of Civilisation*, which is constantly on the tongues of politicians of all shades of opinion, which is to be met with in a thousand articles issuing daily from the press, is not susceptible to a definition acceptable to everyone, for the very good reason that its meaning differs with each individual who uses it.

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Let us endeavour to catalogue—to classify—it.

A word first of all, no more than a word, apropos of politicians and thinkers whompurposely excluding denominations of too extreme a kind-I will call traditionalists. They maintain that civilisation can only develop in the shadow cast by those who have gone before and who are consecrated, as it were, by their statue-like repose. According to them, the only way civilisation can make progress is by remaining constantly under the influence of past ages, by living under the ægis of a long line of phantoms. will not dwell on this. I will confine myself to saying that, if the teaching of those who have gone before is not to be disdained, only sterility of thought can result from an ecstatic contemplation of the past.

True, in the decisive form in which I present it, this applies only to a small number of men. Most of our contemporaries, no doubt, although they preserve the flame of the ancestral hearth, disdain the ashes; in other words, they believe that one only remains faithful to the influence of bygone times by looking and marching forward. Among such, it seems to me, there are two divisions of thought. There are those whom



J. Coillon

I will qualify as Realists, who are recruited chiefly in the camp of politics; and there are those whom I will call Utopians. I ask my readers not to take the terms in too strictly literal a sense; they seem to me to be the best or the least ill-adapted to express my idea. I do not, however, conceal the fact that in order to follow my meaning both distinctions, especially the second, must be very freely interpreted.

I describe as Realists all men—they are the great majority—to whom the Progress of Civilisation means, before all else, an increase of production. These maintain that the condition of Man has improved to the same extent that his power for appropriation of Nature has increased. They say that the discovery, releasing, enslaving of new forces, the control of heat, of the movement of water, of the flow of the tides, result in providing Man with a multitude of inanimate servants, and substitute slaves of iron for slaves of flesh and bone. Another hundred, another two hundred years —what is this in the life of the world? and Nature will be subjected to such a degree that mankind, or nearly the whole of mankind, will form a vast patriciate excluding all state of semi-dependence or semisomnolence such as that of the wage-earner.

Less inclined than the Realists to trust

to time, the Utopians persuade themselves—try to persuade themselves—that by acts of the human will the lot of man can be immediately ameliorated. They do not approve of the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few; contrasting the scandal of insolent luxury with the distress of the poor, they would have the conditions of life made equitable by law. The elimination—or, at least, the softening—of all inequalities is, to them, the first consideration in civilisation's progress. This great step being once accomplished, universal happiness will follow quite naturally.

J. Manaet, Paris.

I have simplified the matter to an extreme degree so as clearly to demonstrate the trends of thought. As a matter of fact, Realists and Utopians approach each other more closely than the brief survey I have just given might lead one to suppose. There is hardly a Realist who ignores the advantage of an equitable distribution of wealth. There is hardly a Utopian who does not recognise the benefits to be derived from development of production. Everyone-all men of enlightenment-will endorse, I am sure, the vigorous words of Jaures, appealing for the advent of societies working together in harmony in the place of the existing antagonistic societies. The one and the other differ only in the means employed.

But here is the weak spot. Utopians, like Realists, fall into a common error. Whatever they may say, their chief preoccupation is material well-being. The progress of civilisation is, to most of them, a question of the alimentary canal.

Now I hear the loud protests of my imaginary interlocutors. They only seek, say they, a greater affluence in life in order to spread culture, to dignify their fellow-men,

to bring them closer together.

Do they really think that the path they follow will bring them to the end they have in view? Do they not perceive that there is danger in directing the mind solely towards an amelioration of existence? How, later on, will they dispel from the mass psychology that fixed preoccupation which they have instilled into it to the exclusion of all else?

I will justify my fears by a glance about us, and invite my readers to do the same.

A great country, the United States of America, adopts realism. Eager for immediate results, she makes up for slow scientific progress by organisation. Organisation of industry! Organisation of labour! She rationalises—I include in the word the whole gamut of technical improvements. What does it all come to? It produces—this is beyond dispute—a level of material civilisation higher than our own. certainly not a negligible achievement. am so little disposed to under-rate it that repeatedly I have expressed the wish that the old Continent would borrow largely from the methods hatched on the other side of the Atlantic.

But I wrote—" borrow"; that is to say—select—not copy.

I would not, in fact, view without apprehension my great fatherland, Europe, adopting methods which may be suitable (I put a note of interrogation) for new or semi-new countries, but which could not be introduced, such as they are, in older nations without prejudice both to them and to the civilisation which they have evolved. A servile transposition of Taylorism for example would, I fear, be detrimental to our working class, resulting in the mass manufacture, not only of products, but also of men.

Let me make myself clear.

Intelligent application of craftsmanship raises the workman. Indefinite repetition of the same gesture in the minimum of time degrades him. It makes him an automaton, to the detriment of the community and of himself.

To the detriment of the community? Without being guilty of any exaggeration I am justified in asserting that many modern inventions were made and prepared by workmen in the anonymity of their daily task. The brains of the weaver suggested the idea of the first mechanical loom. Monge, the great French geometrician, declared that he had found the elements of applied geometry in the figures and dispositions of stones voluntarily arranged by the masons. We may boldly assert that many progressive technical ideas have originated from the skilled application of workmen to their task. This precious contribution to the general welfare would no longer proceed from the wage-earners on the day when they were reduced to play the part of animals.

But—they would not have to work so long! Their wages would be infinitely greater! Every one of them would have a motor-car, would enjoy, at leisure, the charms of the cinema, etc. . .! Granted! This trivial amusement—I had almost said vulgar—does it elevate the soul? The workmen leaving the factory, worn out by six, seven, eight hours of brutalising application to machine or lever and deprived of all intellectual food, will be, or will become, by the very force of circumstances mechanical

men.

What would be the consequences? It is always somewhat risky to attempt to lift the veil from the future. I am going, however, to commit myself to a forecast.

I foresee that the workmen will for a time be content to eat hay out of a gilded manger. They will let themselves drift down the slippery slope of torpidity. They will drag with them the managers, who-having now only to control a submissive, characterless mob that is incapable of resistance and protest-will be engulfed in the general sloth and ignorance. A civilisation of monotony and torpidity will arise . . . a civilisation pulled with a string. If I may be allowed to employ an image, rural landscapes will be levelled and give way to an immense kitchen garden; and I should not care—any more than does a certain English politician—to live in an enclosure of pumpkins and turnips; far away from the ravines, where there is danger of falling no doubt, far from the thickets where there is a risk of lacerating one's hands, but where one enjoys the delight of the unexpected and of struggling against obstacles.

I reassure myself, and I reassure the British statesman, by adding that the

impressions we should experience were we confined in an enclosure of pumpkins would some day be felt by others. It is not in the nature of man to be content for long with a life destitute of action. Those leading such a life, or condemned to do so, will inevitably revolt. And here it is that my fears take definite shape.

Men manufactured in series, whose minds have not been nourished, will easily be swayed by wild utterances. Their overseers, stricken with intellectual debility, will be powerless to counteract the inflammatory harangues, to get the better of the evil counsellors. Lassitude, boredom, the desire for change, will thus lead the automata to hurl civilisation, pulled with a string, into one of those cataclysms of which a lamentable spectacle is being presented to us in the East.

Now, instead of forecasting the future, we will deal with facts.

Just as to the West of Europe the impatience of a young nation, refusing to give due credit to time, overdrives production and seeks to extract an excessive profit from realism, so similarly in the East a band of men stuffed with book-learning is stubbornly resolved upon putting into practice, by physical force, Utopian notions, which I have not said should be completely ignored, but which I maintain should, before anything in them is adopted, be decanted and then allowed to settle—as is the procedure with new wine, which is not consumed until this is done, and even then very circumspectly and prudently for the first glass or two.

We are but poorly supplied, I know, with details of what is happening in Russia. Nevertheless, it seems to me that this great country is falling into the abyss. If she has not yet completely gone to pieces it is because she is living on her own fat. any case she is utterly enfeebled, on the verge, or very near it, of sinking into a retrograde anarchy which threatens to spread to China. So much so that at the moment when I am writing on the progress of civilisation I am compelled to admit that a large section of the inhabited world, in close proximity to Western Europe, is infested with a leprosy like that which are away the provinces forming the boundary of the Roman Empire long before the final fall of the Cæsars.

Is then the prophecy made both by Herbert Spencer and Renan, predicting a period of "return to barbarism," on the point of being fulfilled? Imaginary peril, one will think! I hold quite an opposite opinion. I maintain that the danger foreseen by the English sociologist and by the French philosopher is by no means hypothetical. I maintain that our civilisation is fragile and that the evolution exclusively towards the development of material well-being, at which Utopians as well as Realists aim, contributes to jeopardise its existence.

How are we to look upon such eventualities? the man in the street will wonder. Our civilisation is much more firmly anchored than those which have perished in the past. It is *anchored* by science.

Science? This precisely is the cause of my anxiety.

Listen!

It is commonplace to remark on the transformation brought about in the world by science in less than a century. It is but right to admit that science, even in the most remote times, has always been the chief factor in the material progress of humanity. And this great rôle science is destined to play indefinitely. Utopians and Realists equally rely upon it—and with reason.

But are they fully alive to the perils it conceals? Science is at least as ready to destroy as to construct. It excels in intensifying the horror of tragic conflicts. To-morrow it will reveal to man secrets a thousand times more terrible than those already disclosed to him and which, but yesterday, he put to such terrible use. Thus, unless we are all on our guard, not only will civilisation cease to exist, but also humanity itself; which would be developed only to realise the ancient myth—the fable of the god who devours his own children.

Let it not be argued that this danger has existed at all times. No doubt the means for destruction grew constantly throughout the passing centuries. There is no comparison, however, between the successive inventions of the catapult, gunpowder, the arquebus, the musket, and the terrifying discoveries of the last fifty years, during which man has commenced—he has but commenced—to steal lightning from the sky.

Science must contribute solely for the pacific progress of humanity; this is the remedy. How can it be attained? "Science without a conscience means the death of the soul," said Rabelais, embracing in these few words a truth which a further aphorism will complete: for the salvation of humanity conscience (the word includes

all classes of morality) must advance in step with science.

Now what disturbs me—as, I imagine, it does all who seriously reflect on these questions—is that there has been no simultaneous development between science (which during the last hundred, and especially the last fifty, years has advanced with gigantic bounds) and morality, which has remained at a standstill, if it has not retrograded. Should we be surprised at this marking time or at this recoil? Quite naturally the curiosity of our fellow-men has been awakened by the extraordinary inventions of modern times. The mind has been enthralled by the applications—I do not say, by the laws —of science. These have obsessed, and do obsess, the common intelligence, which has more and more abandoned imaginative speculations.

Then, when there should have been a reaction, Utopians and Realists have fallen into step. Chanting hymns, the one in glorification of production, the other in favour of a better distribution of wealth, ascribing all progress of civilisation to the betterment of material well-being, they have bowed Man down to the earth instead

of directing his eyes heavenwards.

We have arrived at a pass when an English writer, speaking truthfully, could say: "The very existence of man depends upon his power again to discover a common rule of spiritual life." The expression I have seized upon does not, needless to say, imply the introduction of a new Credo. It is only a moral law. Since the dawn of historic times Man has not added a line to the account of his virtues. The French thinker. Remy de Gourmont, has given expression to this in stating the law of intellectual constancy.

But here on earth everything wears away. Beliefs are dissolved and corrupted the more readily as merchants do not cease, and no doubt never will cease, to invade the Temple.

Great renovations are periodically necessarv. Periodically "a common rule of spiritual life" must again be discovered; that is to say (let us not play with words!) -new justifications must be given to old virtues.

By vividly depicting the menaces of death which brood over humanity, by inviting our fellow-beings to save themselves, there is a chance of resuscitating—quite apart from all rites—the substance of the gospel of gentleness and charity preached on the Mount, as also the dogmas of Epictetus—a teaching in any case synonymous.

If those disinterested persons to whom I have often appealed would cease to gargle their throats with words about the onward march of civilisation, if they would relegate to the second rank Realism, Utopianism and material well-being, and devote themselves to this lofty doctrine, I am convinced that their efforts would be crowned with success. Nothing is more gratifying to Man than to be furnished with new motives for returning or remaining faithful to ancient virtues.

YEAR OF GRACE, 1929.

TE are grown wise and nothing daunts us now Who jettison grave old philosophies And turn a swallow-ship with eager prow Hilariously to lighter-hearted seas.

And yet . . . and yet . . . what ballast? O take care! How heavy with fresh hazard are our hands! Have we renounced an aid they ill can spare Who fain would bring their sails to golden strands?

Faith was our nurse till now and held us fast, And grown-up eyes discover her at length As a man sees his mother at the last Stripped to her weaknesses . . . and to her strength! A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By I. I. BELL 0 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD 0

SYNOPSIS OF EARLIER CHAPTERS.

In a London hotel Flora Ballantyre, a Highland girl recently married, is called upon to "mother" a wee Spanish boy whose "madre" has died.

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A quarter of a century later, Flora, now Lady Ballantyre, and seven years a widow, has become a confirmed gambler and is in serious financial difficulties. She is hoping that her son, Steve, whose money she has also risked, will become engaged to Winifred Charters, who has £80,000 of her own. But during a yachting cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Ailsa Maclean, and he is arranging another cruise in the *Miranda* during the following August. Luis, the young Spaniard whom Flora had befriended, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father's papers had made reference.

Faced with further depressions in "Flossies," Lady Ballantyre gets Luis to sell pictures and heir-

looms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parchment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory. Lady Ballantyre sees in a successful search the possibility of restoring her fortunes.

At Tobermory, Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the Miranda party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa. Hector's co-operation is essential if the treasure is to be recovered. He is a canny Scotsman, and his interest is only likely to be aroused if benefit will accrue to Ailsa, on whom he dotes.

Meanwhile Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, has arrived unexpectedly at Tobermory, and a strange motor-launch appears in the bay to land a mysterious foreigner, who gives the name of M. François Dracquier. Luis begins to suspect that his secretary in Spain is taking a hand in the

game

After a dinner-party in the Miranda, Hector Maclean dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis immediately brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it. He will not be disturbing the new floor on so doubtful a quest, for "what would the people of Tobermory think?"

Luis discovers beyond doubt that his secretary in Spain has been tampering with Lady Ballantyre's

letters. Possibly Muñez has already informed the Church authorities of the impending treasure hunt, and the persuasion of Hector Maclean will be but the first of a series of difficulties. The presence of M. Dracquier and the strange motor-launch can hardly be purely accidental. Meanwhile Luis, though deeply in love with Lady Ballantyre, conceives a genuine regard for Ailsa Maclean and learns that though

in taste a simple country girl she is very fond of jewels.

XV.

RRIVED on shore, not far from the landing-place, they encountered Ronald. He would have passed on with a salute, but Ailsa stopped him. greeted Lady Ballantyre and Luis cordially enough, perhaps because Steve was not with them.

"Ronald," said the girl, "we are all having lunch at the house to-day, and I want you to come up—at one o'clock."

The young man began to make excuses. "Besides, Ailsa, I have just left your father, who was kindly asking me, and I told

"I am asking you now. Please, Ron-

The gesture of his big hands betokened defeat. "Well, well, I will come-with pleasure." His smile to the others was apologetic. "You see, we are very busy at the store to-day, and I should not be wasting any time—of course, I do not mean that. exactly; also I am no good in strange company—your father has asked his friend, the priest, too, Ailsa—not that everybody is strange——" He broke off with a short

Your coming will make one of the strangers feel less strange," said Luis, feeling sympathetic towards Ronald, and uneasy at the prospect of meeting Father Macdonald. Was it only the quest of place-names that had brought the reverend gentleman to Mull?

Leaving Ronald, they went up the hill, Ailsa doing the talking. Maclean awaited them at his door.' At the sight of his daughter he frowned; but before the question could come she had answered it.

"Well, well; maybe you were right, Ailsa. It is a pretty big job for Kate, and Mairac has got the giggles this morning. The sooner you are taking charge, the better. Go now."

Ailsa nodded and passed in.

"I ask your pardon, Flora, and yours, Mr. Señor," he said, "but I was not thinking of her coming with you, and it has been a devil of a night. Be pleased to come in. We will go to my office."

He led them across the angle of the hall, into the dining-room, thence down a couple of steps into a little wood-lined room furnished with a big writing-table, a safe, several ancient hair-cloth chairs, and all very untidy.

"I do not like to be bringing you here," he remarked, "but Kate knows to let nobody near my office. Be seated." He placed two chairs at the corners of the table and, after slipping the door-bolt, took his seat between them.

"Ay," he sighed, rumpling his hair, "it has been a devil of a night. Why the devil"—eyeing his visitors almost fiercely—"did you tell me anything about those d——d jewels? If it was not for Ailsa——"His look of indignation changed to one of dismay. "Again I ask pardon. Mr. Señor, will you take a wee dram? What a thing to be forgetting!"

Suspecting that the old man wanted one for himself, Luis, with inward resignation, accepted; the blue eyes of Lady Ballantyre evincing first astonishment and then impatience, while her cousin, in his deliberate way, got up and, from a corner cupboard, brought decanter, syphon and glasses to the table.

Maclean poured out two portions of whisky, and then, with his thumb on the lever, paused, without depressing it.

"You would not be thinking now," he said slowly, glancing from one guest to the other, "that there were any good notions in a syphon of sodda-water—would you?"

"For Heaven's sake, Hector," put in Lady Ballantyre, "let us——"

"Patience, Flora, my dear! You will understand all about it in a minute or two. And now I must be telling you that last night —though I was not saying anything then—I got a good notion, a very good notion, from a syphon of sodda on the table in the saloon of your yacht. It is very likely, indeed, that, if I had not got that good notion, you and Mr. Señor would now be sailing away on the Miranda, and I would be cursing you for telling me a story that I would just have to try to forget. For, without the good notion, I could not imagine myself tearing up my beautiful floor—Ailsa's beautiful floor. I mean-and making a fearful mess in the house, and all, maybe, for nothing, and the whole of Tobermory thinking I had gone mad. Yes, you may believe that, without the notion, I could never have decided——"

"Then, Hector, you have decided!" Lady Ballantyre's hand was at her heart.

"Yes, yes—but excuse me a moment." Carefully he added soda to the glasses, and handed one to Luis.

"Slainte, Mr. Señor—and—and God for-give us all!"

The men drank ceremoniously, and Maclean sat down, sighed, and appeared to fall asleep.

"Hector," said his cousin at last, in a whisper of supplication, "don't play with us."

He woke up and regarded her kindly. "I was only trying to persuade myself that I am not an old fool to be doing this thing. But now I am wondering why you are so troubled, so excited, about it all. If Ailsa's jewels were fetching a million, and you were getting five per cent, it would not be so great a fortune to you—would it now?"

She threw out her hands. "Hector, I need all I can get—badly. But—I cannot tell you why."

"Well, well," he said softly, "I am not asking any questions."

To Luis it was as pain to see her humiliating herself. "Mr. Maclean," he interrupted, "I can tell you this much. Lady Ballantyre requires money, not for herself, but for an excellent purpose."

Maclean nodded. "That is quite enough for me, Mr. Señor," he said courteously. "But you are very strange people, you two. If only you could exchange ages, I would be thinking... But that is none of my business." He took a sip from his glass. "Well, now, Flora, I am ready to tell you everything—but first I must have your promise, and yours, Mr. Señor, that from

this moment you will do what I say, and not interfere with anything. It is the only way that the thing can be done. Do you promise, Flora?"

She hesitated, glancing at Luis. He nodded, saying, "Mr. Maclean is merely asking us to trust him."

"Yes, Hector," she said.

"Thank you, Mr. Señor," said Maclean.
"You have the understanding, and that is as good to me as your promise."

Luis bowed, smiling faintly—at himself. The situation had its humour. He had come from Spain to lead, as it were, an expedition, and already this old Highlander was in full command.

"Very well!" Maclean settled himself comfortably in his chair. "You will sail away on your cruise this afternoon, or this evening—I am not wanting to hurry you—and you will stay away till I send you word to come back. You will not send any wires asking questions. It may be a week—two, three weeks—how can I tell? But, tomorrow morning, the joiners are coming to dismantle the hall, and take up the beautiful floor, and, as soon as they have finished, two men will come and open up the well. I wish I knew how deep it is—but no matter!"

"What are you going to tell the men?" Lady Ballantyre was looking less harassed.

"Just what I am going to tell everybody." He smiled in his beard. "Wait a moment!" He got up, went again to the cupboard, and came back with a glass jug three-quarters filled with clear, brownish ·liquid. Placing it on the table, he said: "That, Mr. Señor, in case you do not know it, is our Tobermory water. It is good, clean, healthy drinking water; but, as you can see, it is not a pretty colour. And, apart from its colour, it would not be the best sort of stuff for making sodda, and leemonade, and so forth, supposing a man was wanting to start a factory in Tobermory, to supply Mull and the Outer Isles, yes, and maybe Oban too, with aerated waters. But now, supposing the man had a well deep in the rock, would he not be asking himself whether the well water might not be the very thing for his factory? I am sure he would. Nothing would be more natural. What do you think, Mr. Señor?"

Maclean took another sip and looked rather quizzingly at Luis.

Luis bowed gravely.

"I think you are a very clever man, Mr. Maclean!"

"Oh, well," was the modest reply, "I try

to make use of the brains that Providence has given to me. If they are not very good brains, it is not my fault. But now you see my plan. I let the people round about think that I am seeking water for a sodda factory. No doubt, some will laugh and say I have got cracked in my old age, and others will look wise and say it might be a very good thing for Tobermory. But it does not matter either way. And it will not much matter when I make the sad discovery that the water will not do. Then they will all laugh, but they will soon forget. But now —listen, Mr. Señor, and you, Flora!—if the people were thinking I was after a treasure -and they would think that, if I was making a secret of it—and if I was finding none, oh, then, I would never hear the end of it—not if I was living to be a thousand!... And that will be the notion I got from the sodda syphon last night!"

"Hector, you have all the wits of our family," cried Lady Ballantyre. "The soda-water factory is an inspiration!"

"Well, well, we need not be dwelling on it, Flora. I just wish I had the inspiration that would tell me for sure whether the jewels are there or not." He turned to Luis. "Now, what do you think the casket would be like?"

"If it was made of lead, Mr. Maclean, as my father believed, and as I hope it was, since lead can stand some wear and tear, it must have changed a good deal in appearance since it was thrown into the well. By now it will probably be a crushed and ugly thing, but I trust you may find it unbroken. After the men have got down to the water you will, I suppose, be keeping an eye on their operations"

"I will be keeping two eyes on every bit of stuff they are bringing up. And when they are finished for the day, Ronald and I will be going through all the rubbish, in case any jewels have got loose. Oh, I will not be taking any chances, Mr. Señor!"

"Must you tell Ronald?" asked Lady Ballantyre. "I don't mean to suggest that

he is untrustworthy. Still--"

"I can trust Ronald with anything, Flora. Besides, it is too big a thing for me to carry by myself. At any moment, I may be wanting help."

"That is so," agreed Luis. "Are you going to tell Miss Maclean about the soda"—he nearly said "sodda"—" factory before

we sail?

"No, no! Ailsa would be seeing through me in about two minutes. Let her sail away and enjoy the cruise, with nothing at all to bother her. And when she comes back, if the jewels are there, well and good; and if not, then I will just have to listen to her lecture about my foolishness. . . . Now, have you two anything more to say?"

"Nothing," Luis answered, "except,

'Thank you.'"

Lady Ballantyre shook her head.

"Well, I have one thing more to say," said Maclean, setting down his empty glass with a bang. "I do not know what you, Mr. Señor, are thinking of me; but I know very well what you, Flora, are thinking. You are thinking I am a nasty old skinflint of a cousin, with my five per cents, and so forth. Yes, you are! And I was thinking very much the same thing in my bed, at four o'clock this very morning-oh, it was a devil of a night!—for I was thinking of the old days, too, when you were the bonniest lass in Mull—and I said to myself: 'Business may be business, and Ailsa is my daughter, but for old time's sake, Flora and her friend -if the jewels are there-are going to get fifty per cent! Not a word! Fifty per cent! It is finished and settled. . . . Have you forgotten your dram, Mr. Señor?"

"Mr. Maclean, in the name of generosity, I salute you," said Luis—and took his medicine. Possibly he needed it. He was

pale.

But Lady Ballantyre had a lovely colour in her cheeks. Fifty per cent! One, at least, of the awful doubts had been removed. She touched her cousin's hand. "Bless you,

Hector," she said softly.

After a while they went out to the garden. There was something of an exaltation about Maclean's manner; perhaps he was feeling that he had carried off things pretty well; at all events, had you seen him strolling across the lawn, one hand in the arm of the lady, the other on the shoulder of the young man, you would surely have noticed a semblance of swagger. But Ailsa, joining them, put him in his place.

"For goodness' sake, Daddy, go and brush your hair before Father Macdonald comes!"

A MAN is not a coward because he is afraid. Luis de Lara, though he had gone into it often enough, had never delighted in danger. A connection between the presence of Father Macdonald in Tobermory and the opening of Lady Ballantyre's letters by Gaspar Muñez in Toledo might at first seem a farfetched theory, since, for a Spaniard, Muñez was an irreligious man, a man most unlikely

to bestir himself ever so slightly for the Church's sake; but it became less apparently far-fetched when one allowed, as Luis did now, for the possibility of his secretary having bargained for a rich reward in the event of the Church becoming repossessed of its jewels. That there should be some spite against himself in such an act Luis could conceive, but that the act should have been inspired by sheer hate, as well as by covetousness, was an explanation which he would have hesitated to accept.

Still, the theory might yet dissolve itself into mere imagination, and while Luis awaited the priest's arrival with misgivings, he had no intention of shirking his company. If the priest, too, had his secret, Luis was determined to get at it. Nevertheless, Luis hoped that Ronald might arrive first: in conversation with the young Highlander, whom he wanted to know better, he would have an opportunity to study Father Macdonald. . . . And all the time he was despising himself for his miserable little plottings.

Father Macdonald, however, came early and, soon after he had paid his compliments to the others, attached himself to Luis, and led him to the bench by the parapet over-

looking the Bay.

"I am delighted to meet you, Señor," he said. "I am much interested in your country and have spent some wonderful holidays in it, though I do not yet know the part you live in. I even speak a little Spanish, and I have some good friends in Spain."

"On your next holiday, you must come to Toledo. It would be a pleasure to show you round the old city, which is almost new to me. Though I live there now, most of my

life has been spent in England."

"Thank you very much. I shall not forget that your home is in Toledo. Will you tell me a little about it now? Do you know enough of Spain to compare Toledo with the other old cities?"

Luis shook his head. "But I will tell you

what I can about my own place."

At the end of twenty minutes he had become convinced that this benign and amiable man was hiding nothing. Father Macdonald was in Tobermory because of his declared purpose, and none other. The weight thus lifted from the mind of Luis was transferred to his conscience. He was the dissembler, and that in the face of one who represented to him all things sacred. Luis felt sick of himself. But for this overpowering love of his he would then and there have

begged the priest's company to a quieter

place, and made confession.

But in the pause he looked over at Lady Ballantyre, who was apparently engaged in trying to put Ronald, lately arrived in new navy serge suit and stiff collar, at his ease. She had been watching Luis, and now, for an instant, her blue eyes met his. Whereupon conscience, as one may figure it, shrugged its shoulders and held its tongue.

The priest was pointing baywards. The grey launch, returned from its speed trials in the Sound, had come to anchor in its former position, near to the *Miranda*.

"The owner of that little boat, Señor, is a fellow-guest of mine at the Mishnish. I thought, at first, he was a compatriot of yours, but he turns out to be from the South of France. I have not made his acquaint-ance, but I fancy our host here knows him." Father Macdonald raised his voice. "Mr. Maclean, I think you know the French gentleman who is staying at the Mishnish—the one who arrived yesterday in the grey motor-boat."

"French gentleman?" Maclean disordered the hair which he had recently brushed so diligently. "No, no, I do not know him. The only French gentleman I know has been dead for many years. Why do you think I know this one?"

"Yesterday afternoon, I walked over to Aros, and on my way back, in the evening, coming towards your gate, I thought I saw the French gentleman walk out. He went ahead of me down the road to the hotel. But it was dusk then, almost dark, and, no

doubt, my eyes were deceived."

"Very likely," agreed Maclean, "though it would not be the first time that strangers have walked into my garden, just to get the view from where you are sitting; and, once or twice, they have come to ask about the castle that once stood here. But I do not think the gentleman would be calling at the house, for Kate is always careful to let me know of any visitors. . . . Ailsa, has Kate been speaking of a visitor last night, while we were on the yacht?"

"No, Daddy," answered Ailsa, putting her hand to her hair and making a little face

at her sire—in vain.

"Well, well, it is no matter, anyway." He looked round and rose. "Ah, here come our young friends from their little voyage! Ailsa, you can be telling Kate to be ready in five minutes . . . Good morning, Miss Charters! You are looking splendid now; much fresher—oh, good morning, Stephen—than

you were looking yesterday. The air of Mull is agreeing with you. You will not be needing any more fancy powders after this! That is what I say to Ailsa when she comes back to Tobermory from the South. Well, well, you are very welcome—and you, too, Stephen."

Miss Charters was certainly looking lovely, and of Steve it must be said that he could easily have looked less happy. After all, he had no fault to find with Winifred as a comrade, when something was going on, and when Ailsa was far enough away. Indeed, he looked happier then than he was to look an hour later when, once more in the garden. he was sitting in comparative seclusion with Then he seemed to have nothing to say, and Ailsa, too, was distrait. She knew she was unreasonable, yet could not prevent herself being annoyed with Ronald, who, captured at last by Miss Charters, seemed to be almost enjoying his captivity appeared to be interested, not only in her chatter, but in her person. Now he was glancing at her boy's head in profile, now at her pretty fingers—he had never seen such perfect examples of manicurist's art—as they daintily picked up the hem of her pretty skirt to set it an inch farther-i.e. to its farthest limit—over her pretty knees. Yes; Ailsa was annoyed with Ronald, and she was still more annoyed with her daddy, who had bothered the Señor into exhibiting his musical "agility" to Father Macdonald, Lady Ballantyre and himself in the hall. What a world it is, to be sure!

Luis was repeating for the third time the Serenade from "Les Millions d'Arlequin," which had, somehow, appealed to his host, when a telegram was brought to Lady Ballantyre. Perhaps she was not looking for a telegram just then; at any rate, she turned towards Kate as one taken by surprise.

Luis, softly playing, fancied anxiety in the parted lips as she tore the envelope, surprise in her expression as she read, and reflection as she refolded the paper.

"No answer," she said to the maid, slipping the paper into her *poche*. She smiled on Father Macdonald, saying, "I hate telegrams, even when they don't matter."

Luis thought impatiently—"Why does she take fright at the sight of a telegram when her finances are all right for the present?"—and smashed into a Spanish dance.

"Aha!" loudly whispered Maclean, nudging the priest: "Observe the agility!...

And wait till you see him at the billiards! Magic! He is a marvellous man!"

At four o'clock, Lady Ballantyre, resisting her cousin's cordial invitation to stay for tea, declared it was time for her party's return to the yacht.

that you should be away before we start work in the morning. Ailsa, if she was using the glass, would be sure to spy that something was going on. But if you were bidding your captain to sail at dawn, it would be all right for me, and, I dare say, would suit him very well. So now



"Luis, softly playing, fancied anxiety in the parted lips as she tore the envelope."

"I do not wish to have trouble with my captain," she explained. "He is against night sailing, and I must give him time to reach a good anchorage before the dark comes."

"Well, Flora," Maclean softly replied,
"I am not warning you out of Tobermory Bay, though I think it will be best

there is no need for you to be hurrying away."

Lady Ballantyre insisted on departure. She had correspondence that must be done before the *Miranda* sailed.

"Perhaps we shall meet again in Tobermory," said the priest to Luis. "If not, may it be in Spain." He lingered in the hall, after they had all gone out to the garden. He was a man of a simple understanding, which, to the humanity he sought to serve, was more helpful than a profound psychology. For nearly thirty years he had lived close,

THEY walked down the hill towards the embarking-place—Winifred still with Ronald, actually making him laugh; Ailsa friendly, in a careful way, with Steve; Lady Ballantyre and Luis almost silent.

The motor-mailboat from Oban was lying



ministering to a community even closer, to nature. Every soul in that community mattered to him, and he knew, at least, when a soul was unhappy.

Luis came back.

"Father," he said, "will you give me your blessing?"

She re-read the telegram received an hour ago. It informed her that "Flossies" had taken an upward spurt of two shillings. For the space of a couple of minutes she thought hard. By repute August was a listless month on the Stock Exchange; yet, in the past, more than one boom had started in August. If only the jewels were a certainty! If only they were not necessary to her! A boom now might make them unnecessary.

. . And, while the girl behind the counter envied her shoes and stockings, and admired her ankles, Lady Ballantyre saw a vision in which she restored, to the last penny, her

son's fortune, and not only repaid Luis, but handed him her share of the jewels for his Church! Poor woman! Gambling is never a lovely thing, but the ideas behind it may be the most beautiful in the world. . . . In the end Lady Ballantyre wrote a message instructing her broker to buy a further five thousand "Flossies."

She came out of the post-office, a new light in her blue eyes, carrying a bundle of letters.

"Ronald," she said graciously, "come on board and have tea with us."

"Yes, do, Ronald," said Ailsa, perhaps a

little too graciously.

"Thank you very much, but I have been a long time away from business—and now I will be saying good-bye." Which he did forthwith, with a return to his early formality.

But he went down the jetty with them, and, the tide being low, it was Ailsa of whom he took care at the slippery places, though in a strictly polite fashion. Tender-hearted creature that she was, she understood, and muttered gently in the Gaelic, "Do not be a silly, proud thing, Ronald"; and added, "I am trusting you to look after my father till I come back."

N the way to the yacht, Lady Ballantyre remembered the letters in her hand and proceeded to sort them out—three for Miss Charters, one for Steve, none for Luis, a bunch for herself, and a number for members of the yacht's crew. Arrived on board, she declared her intention of disappearing till dinner-time

"Do as you please after tea," she said; "a trip in the launch, bridge—anything you like"

Having interviewed the captain, she went below.

Winifred, noting a tendency on Steve's part to gravitate once more towards Ailsa, voted for bridge, and as the others seemed to have enthusiasm for nothing in particular just then, bridge it eventually was.

In her office-cabin, Lady Ballantyre, reading a London banker's form intimating that the sum of Twenty-seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Thirty Pounds, Thirteen Shillings and Eightpence, received from the Banco de Bilbao, had been placed to her credit, gave way.

"Oh, God, how can I go on with this deception?" She was not the first gambler to address the Almighty with the piteous question.

Yet, in a little while, she was persuading herself that the vision in the post-office had been an inspiration, and that by continuing to risk Luis's money, she was doing the best thing possible for Luis.

When Luis met her, just before dinner, he thought she looked tired, but her manner was bright, as were her blue eyes. Later, a light but shrewd little breeze discouraged lounging on deck, and there was bridge in the saloon, Steve standing out and going off to chat with the captain. By eleven o'clock they had all gone to their cabins.

In the dawn, the *Miranda*, a beautiful pallid thing, steamed out of the Bay on her cruise northwards. Luis crushed a cigarette on the full tray, drew the curtain across the port, and turned to his berth. Flora Ballantyre, who had not stirred at the raising of the anchor, slumbered on. Well that she could sleep now! White nights were in store.

XVI.

ECTOR MACLEAN'S forecast respecting his neighbours' views on the opening of the old well had been sagacious enough. The majority grinned, as the majority usually does, and touched its forehead suggestively; the minority looked wise and opined that there might be something in it. But Maclean had not foreseen the extent of the job itself. What a devil of a mess; what a devil of an expense!

He groaned audibly as he surveyed it, on the afternoon of the third day following the sailing of the Miranda, the workmen having departed. Doubtless he would have cursed aloud had not Father Macdonald been at his side. Ailsa would have wailed at the sight of his hair, let alone the aspect of the place. The beautiful flooring was gone, replaced here and there with rough planks; gone, of course, were the piano, billiard-table, and every article of furniture and decoration. The lower pane of one of the windows, which had been smashed by the end of a plank carelessly handled, was now, the broken glass removed, rudely boarded from the outside. Dust was everywhere; the air smelt of lime.

"For, you see, Father," he was saying, "the billiard-table was standing on a deep bed of cement, and, as it turned out, the cement had been laid just where the mouth of the well was. So it was a dev—a terrible work to break up the cement, and there is not an inch of the whole house that has not

got some of the dust on it. Kate is as wild as a female bull; she keeps on declaring that there will be no blessing on it, not if I was getting ten million bottles of leemonade and sodda; ay, and not even if they were all to be turned by magic into bottles of good whisky. My grief, it is the women that are the great discomforters when a man is doing his best!"

"Still," said the priest, picking a cigarette from a yellow packet, "the beginning, I should say, is the worst of it. How long do you judge it will take to get down to the water?"

"Dear knows! You can see now the width of the well—at least, you can get an idea of the width, and I am doubting whether there will be room for a man to swing a pick in it. I expect it will be a case of working away with a pinch, and sending up the rubbish in pails. Fortunately, it is good clean rubbish—broken stones of the old castle, mostly. But I am thinking it will be days and days before we see the water—and, maybe, after all, the water will be no use for sodda."

"Nothing venture, nothing win," remarked Father Macdonald, who was not given to platitudes. He had never fancied his friend as an adventurer.

"And nothing lose!" Maclean gave a dry laugh. "However, we will know more about it in a week or so, and in the meantime we will just be stepping carefully to my office, to see if a wee dram will not take some of the dust out of our windpipes."

RIENDLY and courteous are the folk of Tobermory, and the stranger who would address himself to them need not fear a rebuff.

It was by the merest chance, one supposes, that M. François Dracquier, of Toulon, should have been passing the gate when the two dusty, thirsty workmen came out. M. Dracquier, who also was friendly and courteous, risked a remark on the excellence of the weather, which was so kindly received that he further risked attaching his company for the walk down the hill and, at the bottom of it, proposed a refreshment in the Macdonald Arms.

Not long after this, the grey motor-launch started on the three hours' run to Oban, M. Dracquier being, for reasons of his own, unwilling to entrust a somewhat lengthy telegraphic message to the local office. He found the Oban office closed for the night, but arranged for the dispatch of the message

first thing in the morning, after which he supped, and then returned to Tobermory, arriving, long after dark, at the Mishnish Hotel. The hour was one at which all good tourists should be in bed, and possibly M. Dracquier, having ordered the drowsy boots to bring him a cognac, was not a little surprised to find a guest still in the smokeroom: the guest being Father Macdonald, with a fat notebook and a yellow packet of cigarettes on the table before him. The priest firmly refused the offer of a drink, but was so amiably disposed otherwise, that an hour passed before M. Dracquier could, in common politeness, complain of fatigue, and retire.

"A very interesting gentleman, that," Father Macdonald observed, presenting to the weary boots his apologies, in the shape of a coin. "If he had not told me he was a Frenchman, I should have said he was a Spaniard."

"Oh, they will be all one, these foreigners.

Thank you, sir."

"You did not happen to notice the labels on his luggage when he arrived, did you?"

"He brought only the two suitcases, and they had no labels whatever. And he is getting no letters at all, at all."

"Well, well; it is of no consequence. Good night to you!"

"Good night, sir."

Father Macdonald went slowly upstairs. It was, as he told himself, none of his business; nevertheless, he was curious concerning M. Dracquier. For one thing, M. Dracquier lisped at certain sibilants.

ATE on the following afternoon, in L Toledo, Gaspar Muñez sat at his desk, staring at the green bulb, upon which a film of dust had been allowed to gather. He was seeking to visualise the situation in Tobermory. In front of him lay the papers which he had been studying—the original torn parchment, fetched from the safe in the next room, a letter of several large pages, a picturepostcard, which had been enclosed with the letter, giving an excellent view of part of Tobermory from the Bay, with the position of Maclean's house shown in an inked circle. and a telegram, a jumble of Latin, French and English words, signed "de Lara," though the owner of that name had, in fact, had nothing to do with it.

The letter, posted four days ago, had arrived only an hour before the telegram. It had acted as a depressant, its details suggesting to Muñez even more difficulties

than he had hitherto imagined. But the telegram had had the effect of a strong, quick stimulant. One word of it, in fact—the Latin word puteus—had brought the secretary to his feet, his hand fumbling for the key of the safe. Why had not his late employer-why had not he, himselfthought of a well, a draw-well, as the lurkingplace of the jewels of Santa Barbara? With the word before his eyes, it seemed the most likely place in the world! With the whole message there, it seemed the one possible place. Pah! It was not for any clear, cold water that this wary old man, Maclean, had started to dig!

Thus far Dracquier, to keep to the assumed name, had done well-very well, indeed. Let him do still better, and he, Muñez, would do more than ever he had promised by way of reward; give him much more than a release from his bond of debt. The most that Muñez had originally looked and schemed for was the discovery of something that might be turned to the discredit of his employer, for whom his hatred had been intensified by each succeeding removal of a treasure from the ancient house. Few treasures now remained, and Muñez had reason to suspect that negotiations for their sale were in progress. Luis de Lara, as Muñez conceived it, had ruined himself for a woman, and those jewels, so long lost in yonder outlandish place, were his last hope.

But, if the jewels were there, why should Luis de Lara have them? Why not Gaspar Muñez, by the wits and hands of his instrument? Dracquier was clever enough and cunning enough, as Muñez knew from experience, to outwit where he could not outmatch; he was possessed of an impudence almost courageous; he could be trusted, not so much because of the bond of debt, but because of certain ugly knowledge in Muñez's possession. Why not give him a free hand, abundant funds, and tell him to stick at nothing? It would be a gamble, but Muñez, as owner of a gaming-house and proprietor of a money-lending business, was used to gambles. And what a rich revenge, if he could contrive that Luis de Lara should find this new fortune only to lose it!

With something like a smile, Muñez let his gaze drift from the green bulb, emblem of what he was pleased to deem an unjust servitude, and allowed his body to relax. Absently, as it seemed, he rolled a cigarette. When he had smoked it, he became alert again, and proceeded to frame a telegraphic message to Dracquier. Later, he wrote a

letter to Luis de Lara, having in his mind the Spanish proverb, "He is a fool who thinks another does not think." The letter was calculated, however, to make de Lara think -about something else. Gaspar Muñez had done many cruel things in his time, but none more cruel than this. . . .

YOW it would appear either that the good Father was getting plenty of material for his book within a very small radius, or that he was losing his keenness in the quest. For he seemed content with strolling about Tobermory and neighbourhood, and resting in Maclean's garden, where he occasionally made notes, but, as a rule, meditated peacefully.

"It is maybe that I am getting older," he remarked once to Maclean, "but in this fine weather I am very well satisfied to be sitting at your wall, looking down at the Bay, and across to those Moryen hills. hope you do not mind my coming and going,

just as the spirit moves me?"

"You are very welcome-very welcome, indeed," was the cordial reply. "I am sorry I cannot be joining you more often. But, you understand, I have business to attend to, and now this sodda-water proposition-

"I understand, my friend, I understand, and thank you for the liberty of coming and going. If the weather holds, I shall, maybe, be coming, one of these nights, when it is growing dark, and the midges have ceased from troubling, just to smoke a cigarette in the peace of it all.'

"When you will," said Maclean, after a scarcely noticeable hesitation. "But if you are coming at night, be sure to ring, so that we may have a word, and a wee glass,

together."

It was on the following afternoon that Father Macdonald, idling in the doorway of the Mishnish, and apparently wholly interested in certain operations being conducted from the diving-barge, saw the grey launch, which had been away since morning, slip into the Bay and take anchorage nearer to the shore than it had yet done. Father Macdonald had been waiting for the launch's return. Perhaps he associated, in some way, its return with the mailboat lying at the pier, the mails being now sorted at the post-office. At all events, the sight of M. Dracquier being rowed ashore in the dinghy seemed to bring him to attention, as it were; and when M. Dracquier, on landing, turned in the direction of the post-office. Father Macdonald stepped out and moved in that direction.

M. Dracquier was first to arrive and enter.

... He was at the counter when the priest, having halted just inside the door, was examining the contents of his purse. But the priest saw the official hand over a telegram and a letter, both of which the recipient pocketed before turning away, yet

ing somewhat ashamed of having played the

He was leaving the office when a voice from behind the counter recalled him.

"If you please, are you the Reverend Macdonald?... Then here is a wire for you. I was just going to send the boy along with it."

He opened and read it, and made a grimace



"It was dusky down there, and he could barely distinguish the figures of two men who stood in a break in the trees."

not before the other had seen the stamps. "Splendid weather!" pleasantly remarked the priest, as he passed the foreigner.

Making a purchase of postcards, he said to himself: "Yes; but why should not a Frenchman, especially of the South, have a friend in Spain?" Which, however, is not to say that he had suddenly ceased to be curious. It meant merely that he was feel-

of annoyance. Then, with a shrug of resignation, he went over to the place provided and wrote his reply—"Coming morning steamer. Keep up your heart and take your medicine."

In the evening he went up the hill to tell Maclean of his change of plans. The door of the hall was open, and seeing Maclean and Ronald there in earnest conversation, he waved his hand and passed across the lawn to the parapet, where he lighted a cigarette as some slight protection against the midges. In the still air they were plentiful and vicious, and he was wishing himself indoors, when the sound of voices drifting up from the wood below drew his glance thither.

It was dusky down there, and he could barely distinguish the figures of two men who stood in a break in the trees, apparently surveying and discussing the wall of rock. Nor could he hear what they were saying. But presently, as they turned to go, one tripped in the undergrowth and stumbled, letting out a sharp exclamation.

"Well, now, if that was not a Spanish bad word, surely I was never in Spain!" thought Father Macdonald. "I wish that young Señor were here to tell me for certain."

Just then Maclean called: "Come in, come in, before you are eaten up! Ronald and I have finished our business."

In the office the priest showed his host the telegram, which was short and simple—"Mrs. Macleod wants you."

"And who the dev—who is Mrs. Macleod?" inquired Maclean.

"She is an old body of ninety or so, who will not take the doctor's medicine, and then she is not so well, and thinks her time has come. I suppose she was feeling shy of the young priest who is taking charge, and she made her grandson wire for me. He will be ashamed, poor lad. Very likely it is just another false alarm—there have been many in the last few years; but, you see, I promised her that I would come to her, at any time, from the end of the world—and so I must go."

"What a dev-a terrible shame to spoil

your holiday!"

"Well, between ourselves, I agree with you, but we have all got to attend to our business, whether it is of poor souls or sodawater." The priest laughed, and became serious. "No, no, Mr. Maclean—thank you very much, but just the half of that! Put it back. I will not take it all! . . . Yes, that is better. Slainte! If all goes well, I will be seeing you again in three or four days. When are you expecting your friends back?"

"I do not know for sure. In a few days, maybe. They have been out to Harris. To-night they are lying at Gairloch. To-morrow, if the weather holds, they will be

sailing round Skye. It is not looking so well." Maclean took a drink. "He is a nice fellow, that Mr. Señor," he said casually.

"Yes; I was interested in him—apart from our religion—and would like to see him again, especially about a word which I think is Spanish. By the way, do you remember me speaking about a Frenchman who is staying at the Mishnish?"

"Yes, yes; I was just going to tell you that he was here an hour ago. He has not the very good English, but he is very polite -oh, very polite-and he is buying all his motor-spirit from Ronald—so I was very polite too. He had been hearing about the old well, and was wanting to know if I was finding any stones of the old castle with human markings on them. He is one of those antiquarians, you see. Even in France they are having them. So I told him that, if I got any such stones, I would send him word. And I showed him where the old castle was long ago, and the view from the wall, and gave him a wee dram, and he went away, looking as happy as a French face could look."

"He did not mention Spain, did he?"
"No, no. No country but France. He
gave me his card—where is it?—never mind
—but he is in the silk business in Toulon,
and this is the first time he has been out of
France."

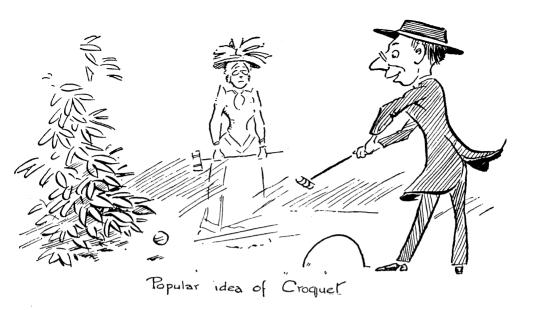
"Well, well; that's that," said Father Macdonald. "And how are you getting on with the well?"

"Do not be speaking about it! It was getting on nicely, but my two workmen are going to a marriage in Tiree to-morrow, so that means at least two extra days for me to be living in a mess, with a wild-bull house-keeper. No, no, we will not be talking about the well, if you please."

They talked of other things, the host a little absently, and at the end of half an hour the priest took his leave. He did not see M. Dracquier that night, and in the morning, before that gentleman appeared, was on his

passage to the Outer Isles.

Lest the reader cares to know, the telegram had been another false alarm. At the sight of her beloved priest the old body decided that her time was not yet come. But, surely enough, the old body unknowingly, indirectly, had helped to set the stage for tragedy. For Father Macdonald had left Tobermory, more curious than ever.



IS CROQUET A GAME? •

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED

By H. F. CROWTHER-SMITH

HERE is no question whatever in my own mind that croquet is not only a game, but an exceedingly

The heading to this article is put in the form of a question because I know many people find it difficult to believe that such a thing as croquet can possibly be played by any one, anywhere, in this enlightened twentieth century.

And I have often found, when the conversation in the club smoking-room has turned to games (the merits of rugger, cricket, lawn tennis, golf, "squash," badminton and billiards all having been discussed), if croquet is mentioned at all there is a laugh at once—a horrid, derisive giggle—and some cynical fellow will say, "Croquet? But is croquet a game?"

Now that question, I feel, requires an answer straight away, and I hope to make

such use of the opportunity afforded me that many who read this article will be converted to my own opinion.

Roughly speaking, there are two kinds of people who need to be put right about

croquet.

The first—and perhaps the worse—is the kind of man who firmly believes that only pale young curates and elderly spinsters play croquet. He thinks that it can be indulged in on any-sized plot of grass, of any surface; that there are no rules; that a player can slog his opponent's ball as far as possible into the rhododendron bush; that there are no boundaries; that the hoops are at least a foot wide; that there is a cage-like hazard in the centre of the ground with a tinkling bell which the ball must ring in transit; that the balls and mallets are mere boxwood toys, gaily striped to look pretty; and that, generally speaking,

no man worthy of the name of sportsman could possibly waste his time over such utter piffle.

That such fatuous folly has at times been indulged in at garden parties may be true,

conceivable kind of driver, brassie, niblick, mashie and putter, may meet a friend with just one single, solitary mallet, and will greet him thus: "What! Going to play in a croquet tournament? And taking your

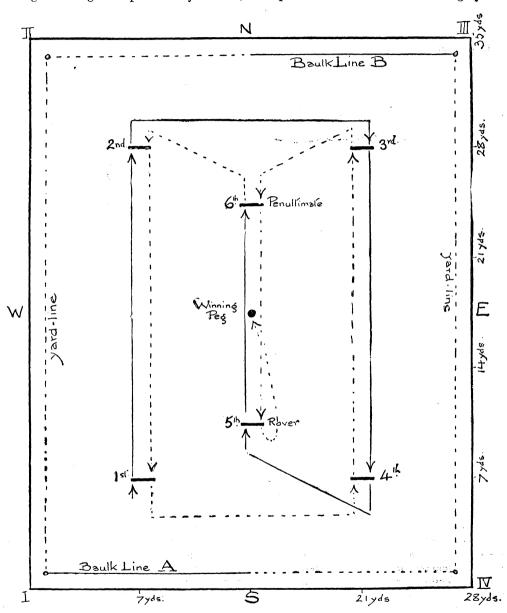


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE LOOPS AND THE WINNING PEG AND THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARE MADE.

but to call it croquet would be as absurd as to say that bagatelle is billiards, or that rounders is cricket.

Moreover, this scoffer at croquet, with a golf-bag slung round him chock-full of every own mallet with you? Hanged if that isn't the funniest thing I've ever heard!"

The incident appeals to me as being screamingly funny—but from a different point of view.

The other kind of person who doesn't think croquet a game takes a totally different view.

Uppermost in his mind is the idea that it is all so terribly scientific, so bewilderingly high-brow, that it couldn't reasonably be looked upon as a game at all.

He pictures the croquet player as a man with a highly developed mathematical brain—a kind of Senior Wrangler—going on to the lawn equipped with theodolites and other similar instruments; a person teeming with all-kinds of formulæ, and relying on a superior knowledge of logarithms, permuta-

But enough of the existing ignorance of croquet; let us start to dispel it.

Just a short outline of the history of the game.

Apparently croquet came to us from Ireland over seventy years ago, but it was then devoid of the present advanced standard of tactics, and gave no scope for the skill and accuracy which marks the game of to-day.

A National Croquet Club was formed in 1870, which was afterwards amalgamated with the All-England Croquet Club at Wimbledon. It is to the former institution



tions and combinations to bring about the downfall of his opponent.

Among others who don't know that croquet is a game is the man (perhaps a county cricketer) who has a naturally good eye for games, and is convinced that this alone will enable him to beat anybody on the country-house croquet lawn.

He thinks it is merely a matter of shooting through the hoops.

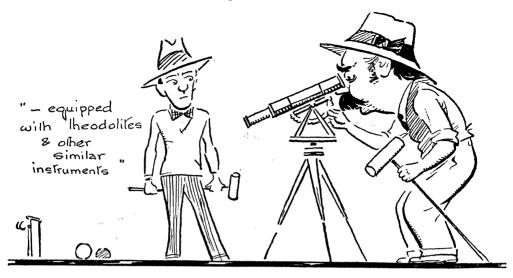
Should there happen to be even a moderately good croquet player among the house party, he could set this other man to make only the last three points, and himself the whole thirteen, play him for a "fiver"—and win it.

that we owe the foundation of the existing laws of the game.

There followed shortly after the above date a rapid decline in the popularity of the game, due largely to the birth of a game called lawn tennis.

This game was introduced in 1875 into the programme of the All-England Croquet Club and soon caused a temporary downfall of croquet.

Even in those days the question of the "gate" at championship meetings was considered important. The few shillings per annum derived from croquet were trivial compared with the hundreds of pounds that lawn tennis produced.



So croquet tournaments at the All-England ground were discontinued, and the Club which was originally the All-England Croquet Club, and then the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club, became merely the All-England Lawn Tennis Club.

It is interesting, however, to note that even to-day on the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships Programme the Club is described as the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

Those who remember the beautiful surface of the centre court at the old Wimbledon probably never realised that the croquet championships were played there before lawn tennis was even thought of, and that the perfect quality of the turf was largely due to the All-England Croquet Club.

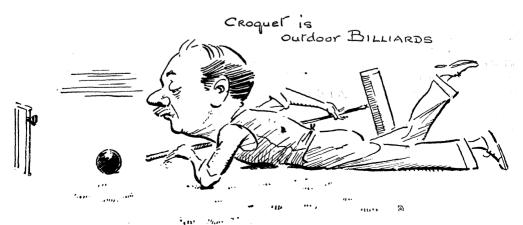
Now the blow which the game received from lawn tennis was by no means a "knock out." At Brighton and Brentwood much was done to keep the game alive; and at Oxford and elsewhere tournaments were organised by a few faithful and ardent devotees which did much to promote its welfare and revive its popularity.

Not till 1897, however, did croquet really begin to take its place, and deservedly, among recognised outdoor games.

Seeing the general activity aroused by the numerous tournaments held in various parts of the country, it was deemed essential to have a governing body to control the interests of the game, and in 1896 the Croquet Association was formed.

Starting with a membership of about 150, the numbers have increased, year by year, until they now stand at over 2,000.

His Majesty the King is Patron of the Association; Lord Desborough is its President. There is a Council of 24 members





—including two ladies—which is responsible for the laws of the game, the promotion of championships, and the management of over seventy tournaments held each year. Additional evidence of the live state of the game to-day may be found in *The Croquet Association Gazette*, the official organ, which is published weekly throughout the season.

The game of croquet is best described as "outdoor billiards." It follows, therefore, that the lawn on which it is played must be of the very finest turf, plumb level, and of uniform surface.

At Roehampton Club, the headquarters of the Croquet Association, will be found ten lawns possessing these qualities.

The court measures 35 yards in length by 28 yards in breadth.

The diagram on page 216 shows the position of the hoops and the winning peg—and the order in which they are made.

Each hoop and the winning peg is termed a point, and the game is won by the player who first makes all the 26 points in order—i.e. the six hoops, both ways, with each ball, and the winning peg.

The hoops are $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide (inside measurement), stand 12 inches out of the ground, and are, generally, of $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch iron.

The four balls, coloured respectively blue, black, red and yellow, are made

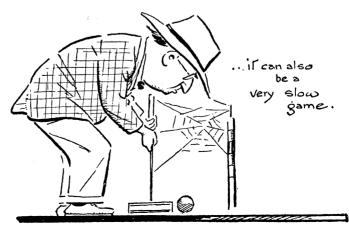
of composition (far more resilient than the old-fashioned boxwood), weigh about 16 ounces, and are $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter.

It will, therefore, be noted that there is only $\frac{1}{8}$ inch difference between the diameter of the ball and the width of the hoop. The hoop being a very rigid thing, there is not very much margin for error.

The first turn of each ball must be made from either Baulk-line A or B.

The winner of the toss has either choice of start or choice of balls, that is, Blue and Black, or Red and Yellow.

Here I must tell you that once the four balls have been played from either Baulkline, the striker may play either of his two partner balls, i.e. Blue or Black, and Red or Yellow; but he must continue to play the colour that he commenced the turn with throughout that turn. This (the "either ball" game, as it is called) is a comparatively





"spar" for an opening. X is concerned with the safest place to lay his "break," and Y tries to prevent it—or, better still, to turn the position into a break for himself.

Y now plays his Red ball: from the A Baulkline so that it crosses the W boundary about 10

yards down.

X knows that this is intended to tempt him to shoot at it instead of joining his partner ball. It is a favourite device of the second player at the start, and is known as "laying a tice."

X decides to go for Red with his Black. Now note that he shoots from the corner spot of the Baulk-line, so that, if he

recent change, and has, it is generally agreed,

improved the game.

The winner of the toss does not necessarily gain any very great advantage; indeed, often a player will purposely put his opponent in, believing that he will get more advantage thus than by taking the innings himself.

With these facts and the diagram in front of us, the game will probably be most easily understood by describing briefly an imaginary match between two first-class players, whom we will call X and Y.

X wins the toss and decides to start. Y, with choice of balls, takes Red and Yellow. X, playing from A Baulk-line, hits ("roquets" is the term) his Black ball over the E boundary, somewhere near the 4th hoop. He replaces it (as all balls that pass the boundary must be replaced) on the yard-line opposite the spot at which it crossed the line.

Here I shall expect our would-be converts to shout in chorus, "What on earth does he do that for? The 1st hoop is on the other side of the ground!"

The explanation is that the making of points at croquet is not a matter of single hoops, one at a time.

The "break," as at billiards, is the thing. So, especially at the start, the players



misses, he goes well away from Red, down to the 2nd corner. But he hits this Red ball—this "tice."

And here let me say that after a hit (a roquet) the croquet-stroke must follow.

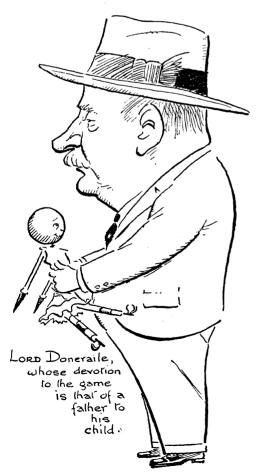
The striker's ball is placed in contact with the roqueted ball and the stroke played so that there is a perceptible movement of that ball. In most cases both balls not merely move, but travel a considerable distance.

Now X wants to achieve two purposes with this particular croquet-stroke: to leave Red somewhere near the centre of the ground and at the same time get to Blue, his partner ball, on the E boundary.

This is not an easy shot, but essential to

the expert—and he achieves it.

Arriving at Blue, he roquets it, and, with the croquet-stroke, adjusts the positions of the two balls so that he leaves the least possible target for his opponent, who can shoot, with Yellow, from either Baulk-line.





Y chooses to shoot from B Baulk-line at Blue and from such a point on the line that, if he misses, his Yellow ball will finish in the 4th corner. This corner is probably the least easy from which to pick out a ball and make use of it.

Y misses the shot (a matter of, perhaps, 25 yards) and Yellow is placed on the 4th corner spot.

X will now attempt to make his break. Remember the positions of the four balls, and note, on the diagram, the positions of the hoops and the order in which they have to be made.

Obviously, to start with, X must be content with a 3-ball break. The rough principle of this is to have a ball to help make the first hoop in order, and another assistant ball for the next hoop in order.

That being understood, we can now drop the distinguishing letters X and Y, and merely express the players by the colours of the balls.

Blue hits Black into such a position that, in the croquet-stroke which follows, he can easily send it to the 2nd hoop and stop himself about a yard behind Red.

By means of what is called a "rush," he drives Red to a spot within a yard of the playing side of the 1st hoop.

Now here the croquet-stroke is the approach shot for the hoop. In this stroke,

Red is sent a little beyond the hoop, Blue stopping accurately in front of it.

Blue then runs the hoop so that, when through, he can "rush" Red to the most convenient spot for the ensuing croquetstroke. This is now in the nature of a split-stroke, Red being sent to the 3rd hoop and Blue going to Black.

This ball is used to make the 2nd hoop just as Red was to make the 1st.

After making this hoop Black is sent to the 4th hoop and Blue to Red at the 3rd.

At this stage Blue has to think about picking out Yellow from the 4th corner.

This is not merely because the 4th ball simplifies Blue's break-making; it is of vital



necessity in break-finishing and arranging the balls for Black-Blue's partner.

Indeed, the finish of a break is almost more important than the break itself—as we shall see.

Blue approaches the 3rd hoop making certain that, after running it, he can "rush" Red to a spot where he can comfortably "split" it to the 5th hoop and himself within a yard or two of Yellow.

Having accomplished this, Blue sends Yellow to the 6th Hoop and himself to Black at the 4th.

As space is limited, we must assume that Blue has made all the remaining hoops (he is now what is called a "rover") by the "break" method which has been explained.

We have remarked on the vital importance of the finish of the break, and Blue will have had it well in mind long before making the last hoop. This is essential—to think and plan ahead.

The finish of the break involves collecting all the balls round the partner's hoop—in this case, the 1st. Blue will leave Red and Yellow on either side of this hoop so that the hoop prevents either ball from hitting the other. They are said to be "cross-wired." The position requires much skill and delicacy of touch.

skill and delicacy of touch.

Black is then "rushed" to the vicinity of the 3rd corner, and Blue, while leaving these two balls conveniently for himself, will also make sure that his opponent has only the smallest target that the law permits

Now note the position, that if either ball (Red or Yellow) shoots—and misses, Black has a ball at his first hoop in order, and can put another at the next in order, i.e. he has the material for a break.

The situation in which we here find Red (or Yellow) represents the one weakness of the game. He, as the out-player, can only obtain the innings by bringing off a long shot of about 30 yards; the odds against which, even for a first-class player, are probably about four to one.

Should he hit, however, he reaps a very ample reward, for the break is also laid for him.

Even if he misses he may, later on, be presented with the innings owing to a breakdown by Black. For often the second break does not go so well as the first.

But we need not worry whether X won the first game of the match by the maximum number of points—viz. 26; if so, Y perhaps did the same to him in the second; and the third was probably a much more in-and-out affair.

To any unbigoted mind I have given sufficient evidence that the game is one that calls for the very highest degree of skill, the most perfect co-operation of hand and eye in every stroke, and delicacy of touch is as essential as it is in billiards.

There is no monotony about the game. Even two consecutive all-round breaks are never played exactly alike: the approach to each hoop is absolutely different.

If skill is the essential factor in games, then croquet must take a high place, for no other outdoor game has such a perfectly accurate field of play where scoring of points depends upon fractions of an inch.

Apart from the fascinating variety of strokes—follow through, stop-shots, and top-spin can all be made with the mallet, as in billiards—the tactics of the game give quite as much interest as those of chess.

When to shoot, and when not to shoot; where to lay the break, when giving "bisques" (extra turns), in a handicap; and many other such intriguing situations occur which supply the tactician with plenty of scope for his mental skill.

4.00 A

That there is not sufficient exercise in croquet is a matter of opinion.

I believe the pedometer will prove that during the game a player has taken quite a long walk.

It is not a game for young men: it is not likely to be given even a "half-Blue" at the Universities. But for those who can no longer take violent exercise, and require a real recreation that will so absorb their minds that business and worries are forgotten, I can confidently declare that croquet is the game par excellence.

SUSAN AND HER LOVERS.

LAGGING far behind,
Thinking no one knows,
Susan lets the summer wind
Court her like a rose;
From his hiding place
Out, out, out he rushes,
Sets his kisses on her face
And covers it with blushes.

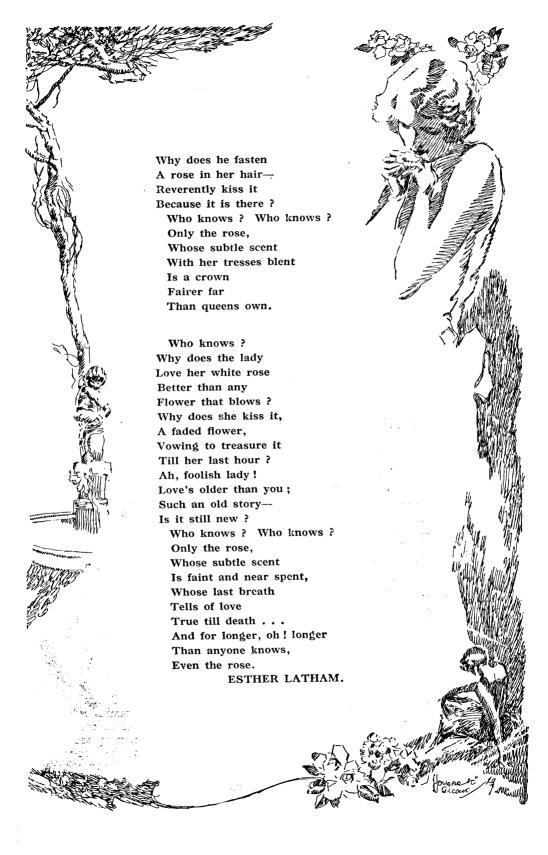
Lagging in the lane,
Thinking no one sees,
Susan lets the summer rain
Woo her an he please;
Lets him touch her hair,
Toss its shining tresses,
Give her diamonds for wear
And bind them with caresses.

Passing from the lane,
Thinking no one knows,
Susan wanders home again
Blushing like a rose;
Of this sweet ado
Naught her tongue uncovers,
Yet I pass this tale to you
Of Susan and her lovers.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

GROZIER HERBERTSON





YOUREXCELLENCY

By G. B. LANCASTER

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

9

R. JAMES CUMMINS, out-going Governor of the San Rozaire I Group, sat behind the latticechicks of his office and looked at the incoming Governor, who was being called His Excellency for the first time and was quite dizzy with it. Out in the blue anchorage (the wharf was only for row-boats), with the tropical sun boiling up the tar on her decks, lay the little gun-boat which -thank the Lord, thought Cumminswould in a few hours carry him away to cool drinks and civilisation. Yet he had a kind of tenderness for this sun-burned collection of atolls which would grow everything with a facility which was almost immoral and which the Dutch by peaceful penetration and some obscure Treaty had extracted from Portugal, and the British had swapped a cake of soap or a bit of the North Pole for.

Cummins's politics did not go deeper much than that, and he hoped that the new man's would not. This oily blue Caribbean Sea, which went west to the gates of the Panama Canal and east to the deuce knew where, had taught him three things. Keep cool, or you'll have a seizure: interfere with your very mixed and obstreperous subjects as little as you can: and leave the rest to Jaffery. Then a command used by Britain to try out her weaklings and productive of more broken careers than any other may lead on to glory—as it was leading Cummins. But you must leave the rest (which includes the whole) to Jaffery.

The new Governor (who was also a new broom) demurred. It was his command, hang it, he said in his nice English voice, and he wasn't going to leave anything to anybody. Cummins, remembering dimly the time when he too had been a new broom, yawned and repeated:

"You'll never get along without Jaffery, you know."

"I must see him first," said His Excellency.
Cummins sat up. Even with all the
precautions he had taken this might be
fatal. He tried to explain further.

"You'd never understand all these lingoes and intrigues—the whole silly mess of it—in a lifetime. Jaffery does. I leave it

to him."

"How do I know he's not at the bottom of the whole silly mess?"

Cummins gave it up; yawned again, and sent a greasy Portuguese servant to bring Mr. Jaffery. Having taken the precaution to secure Jaffery overnight, lock him up in the best bedroom with materials for a shave and a bath and a complete change of clothing, and separate him entirely from anything stronger than coffee, Cummins spoke with more confidence than he usually felt concerning orders to Jaffery. He had less than no confidence at all in this new Governor of San Rozaire, who looked eighteen and was probably twenty-eight and a writer of vers libre or something of the sort. He wore his hair too long to be a real poet. New Oxford Movement or something, thought Cummins, who was as vague about the world as about politics.

A firm step rang on the matting of the passage, and as Jaffery came in Cummins nearly gasped. Jaffery was playing up and no mistake. Hardly recognisable, by gad! He bowed stiffly as Cummins made the introduction, and Cummins recognised what he had suspected often enough. If this clean, pinkly-brown, pompous young fellow was English Public School, so was the lean, muscular, tropic-seared man who was Jaffery. Jaffery bowed, turned interested eyes on Cummins.

"Boy or girl?" he inquired.

"Sir," began His Excellency, flushing; but Jaffery had flung himself into a long chair and was shouting for drinks.

"A long peg, Miguel. So this is the chap? Oh, Lord! What will they give us next? Oh, England, my England. . . . Miguel, you ruffian, it's warm.'

"Be good, Jaff," urged Cummins, much His nerves were bad in these days. "You and His Excellency must be friends."

"Excellency? Where? Quite

shandy, Cummins, old chap."

"I," said the English boy, rising, red as a turkey-cock, "have nothing to say to this

man. He may retire."

Jaffery sat forward in his chair. In the loose white trousers that belonged to Cummins his thin knee-bones stuck out. His thin hands hung clasped between them. Before drink and other rottenness had made a wreck of Jaffery's body he had been a very strong man. His brain was still strong when it was clear. It was clear now-for the minute.

"Cummins gave me a very fair rake-off for all the devilling I did for him," he said "What will you give conversationally.

me ? "

"The toe of my boot, probably," said His Excellency the English boy.

Jaffery yawned, turned lazy eyes on Cummins.

"Got a smoke, old son?"

Cummins supplied him, distracted almost beyond speech. Cleaning Jaffery up had been anything but a success. Evidently it had reminded him of days when he had been-something or other. Drunk and broke as he usually was, Jaffery was easier handling. You could bully him. ways he was indispensable.

"Your Excellency," he said earnestly, "I think . . . I know it is worth your while to overlook the—the natural result

of-er-dissipation---"

"D.T." said Jaffery, pulling at the cigar.

"Twice at once."

Of course. But—but there's nothing Jaffery doesn't know about the troubles here. Intrigues, sporadic revolutions, blights in the pine-apple crops, and—and so on. Is there, Jaff?"

"No need to trot out my credentials," said Jaffery, draining a second peg. "Let's

hear his-if he has any."

"No. I absolutely refuse. I——" His Excellency clapped on his solar topee and looked at Cummins. "I will walk down with you to the boat," he said haughtily.

"There, there," said Jaffery, patting the "Pompshus l'il piece! Pompshus. Pompus Pilate. Pom, pom!"

On the last word he fell asleep over the arm of the chair and the two Excellencies walked out in silence and turned along the broad flaring street towards the little wharf where negroes were loading oranges and bananas into open boats. Palm-trees dazzled like cut bronze against blue sky, bluer sea. Heat between the low yellow houses of Portuguese occupation seemed to rise and fall in rhythm. Naked black children sat in the blue shadows. The new Governor ran a sticky finger round inside his sticky collar, gasped, and burst out:

"You rely on that drunken hound?

You expect me to rely on him?"

"You won't last long if you don't," protested Cummins, very bothered. "San Rozaire had three Governors in five years, you know, and the place broke 'em all. Then I got hold of Jaffery. He pulled me round, and I'm going to a big rise, as you know."

"I don't want to be uncivil," said His Excellency, pleasantly. "But don't you mean that Jaffery got hold of you?'

"I hardly understand," said Cummins, who from fever and general inertia hardly

understood anything just now.

"I mean that it's Jaffery and not San Rozaire that breaks the Governors—unless they let him alone."

Cummins protested hotly. He would stake his life that old Jaff was no doubledealer. Why . . . they often yachted together, and there was nothing Jaffery didn't know. He could talk Latin. He could make Greek verses.

"That's nothing," said His Excellency, who couldn't and didn't want to, and whose hair was rather long simply because such was the fashion. "I shall have nothing to do with the fellow, but I hope there is no danger here. My wife . . ."

"Your what?"

Cummins, who would as soon have expected to hear him say My hobby-horse or My hoop, stopped to stare, and a few young mulatto bucks in white linens and yellow shoes and brilliant hat-bands stopped too. The new Governor was scarlet.

"I said my wife," he repeated with deadly suavity. "Any objection?"
"N-not at all. Most men have wives.

I haven't."

Cummins was all for placation. He talked eagerly while the young bucks chewed gum with great red revolving mouths. There were quite half a dozen Englishwomen here—out on the plantations. And the wife of Lyons, agent for the Amalgamated North Holland Line, which called here for fruit, was charming. And Shanks had had an English wife, but she died. Most white women . . .

Feeling himself getting into deep water, Cummins made his good-byes hurriedly, and drew a long breath when the gun-boat took him into deeper water still and the San Rozaire Group became a scatter of gold-set emeralds in the distance. Well, let Jaff and the new man fight it out as they chose. Cummins was through. But he was sorry for the woman.

The new Governor's name was Sir Royd Penderby, but this did not matter, since San Rozaire called him Your Excellency, and his wife (when she came by the next boat) called him Pen, or Angel-face, or Pigface, or anything else which came into her merry head. They were a tall, clean, fine pair of children playing with fire, and Jaffery would have helped them if he could. Within a few weeks (during which he had been too busily engaged in drinking Cummins's suit and a lining Cummins had kindly, if mistakenly, left in the pockets to observe anything else) Jaffery called on the Governor, and the Secretary-who feared Cummins's devil as he had never feared Cummins —let him at once into the Governor's private Penderby, half stripped and giddy in the terrific heat, was struggling to bring a mass of notes in several languages into some kind of order. There was a claim by one Senhor Terciera against some Company (name illegible) about a cocoa-nut grove, and the local magistrate having given it against the Senhor he had protested by chopping down the trees. Now both sides had come to the Governor demanding compensation, and everyone else on the island (Lores, they called it) had apparently written their views in bastard Portuguese, New Yorkese, Dutch, and a bit of Mexican, helped out by misspelt English. Secretary—he came from Brazil—insisted that only Jaffery could make head or tail of it, but His Excellency didn't want Jaffery's heads or tails, thank you. would attend to the matter himself. was still young enough to think he could do it.

When Jaffery came in he looked up with a scowl which deepened as he recognised his visitor. Jaffery had not shaved since

they last met. He needed a bath badly, but he needed a drink more than anything on earth and an older man would have given it when he asked for it. Penderby did not, even when Jaffery descended to sudden whining and a cry:

"For the love of God!"

"Get out, you drunken brute," said His Excellency.

"By — don't I wish I was drunk," said Jaffery. He dropped on a chair and blinked at Penderby. "Give me a drink and I'll tell you—suthin' you...orter know." He sunk his head in his hands. "Can't talk ...'thout a drink."

"You'll get none here. Go, before I put

you out."

"Know what's the only 'digenous animal on the Group?" demanded Jaffery suddenly. "'Course you don't. Don't know anythin'. Lizard. That's the only dig—dig—dig animal." After this bit of information he dropped his head again. "Wish you'd give me a drink," he said gently.

His Excellency got up and opened the door. His words intensified the hint.

Jaffery said gently:

"I was Cummins's devil, y'know. Never asked my kudos. C-Cummins got it all an' I did the work. Saved him. Be a pal, old chap, and give me a drink 'n I'll do the same for you."

Next moment he was sitting on the hall mat with the door shut. He got up slowly and moved away in the direction whence drinks used to come. One came—from Heaven or the Secretary. Jaffery, pulling himself together, said: "See here, Jorge. If your Old Man makes an enemy of me he'll soon wish he was dead—and p'raps he will be dead and I'll be His Excellency at last. There's no telling."

Jorge did not laugh. He knew something of the many holes Jaffery had pulled Cummins out of and the infinite number Penderby was in already. "Senhor, you would be a better Governor than them all," he said, and bowed Jaffery out, where the sun took him just by the bond-stores, so that he lay down by a crate of bananas and fell asleep there.

Penderby flung his papers aside and went up to the tennis-courts where his wife (whom he called Pat because some criminal had christened her Guenevere) was beating Forbes of the bonding-stores at singles, with a dozen little niggers in short shirts picking up the balls. The court was painted dull red to take off the glare; but the players wore white, and the pavilion was a violent green against blue sky, and the hibiscus hedge a flaming fire. His Excellency blinked. Too much colour everywhere. Natives every darn colour the human flesh can take, anxiously that most of them had minds to match, just as the white Englishman is supposed to have (but he is occasionally disappointing), Penderby retrieved Pat and walked down to the wharves with her.



"'Catch hold,' said Pat sharply. 'I can't steady him by myself."

from creamy Spanish girls in incredible pink mantillas, through the mongrel yellow of Chinese and bastard Indians out of Central America, to the shining pot-black of negroes from Haiti. Beginning to suspect rather When she squeezed his arm with her firm young hand and gave him that delicious look between raillery and love trouble went out of his sky, and it did not return until Pat saw Jaffery behind the crates on the edge of the wharf, with mangy dogs nosing at him.

"Here's a sick man. Heave him up, Pen," she said, walking over.

"Drunk. Leave him alone," said Pen-

derby, recognising his enemy.

Pat prodded Jaffery gently with her racquet, and Jaffery opened his eyes and smiled. His smile was the most gentlemanly thing left him and had always been a dubious asset, because it usually did to women what it now did to Lady Penderby.

"Poor devil," she said softly. "Let me help you up. This way...no; Pen would be better. Catch hold, Angel-face."

"Leave him alone, Pat. I tell you he's

drunk. . . ."

"Catch hold," said Pat sharply. "I

can't steady him by myself.'

Jaffery, now on his feet, nodded at His Excellency.

"You hear, old top? She . . . can't

steady me by her berself."

He lurched to prove it, felt Penderby grip him and jerk him away from the girl. No. Not quite, by Jove. She had muscle, too, it appeared.

"Don't pull me in pieces, darlings.]

won't leave you," he said.

"Do you wish to make an exhibition of yourself. Pig-face?" said Lady Penderby to His Excellency. "Here's a quite nice little crowd collecting. Supposing he is drunk, that's no reason why we should be inhuman. Now, my flotsam and jetsam, march. Where d'you want to go, by the way?"

"Governor's Residence," said Jaffery, very loud. Then, low and confidential: "Thash where I really b'long, y'know.

When I was His Excellency—"

"Pen!" cried Pat, her blue eyes suddenly wide, her pretty pink cheeks suddenly blanched. "Is he really? Was he . . . oh, was he perhaps one of those Governors you told me of who went under?"

"Of course he's not," said Penderby

furiously.

"Of course I am," said Jaffery, concentrating his entire force on the last word. After that he dropped with closed eyes between his two tall white supporters. "Flower by the wayside—p-plucked," he murmured.

Penderby, who apparently knew his Pat, sent a grinning negro for his car; bundled Jaffery in, and ordered a Chinaman who knew where Jaffery hung out just now to sit beside the chauffeur. In the back seat

Pat supported Jaffery, who had begun by telling all the lies he could think of and was now silent lest he might tell some truth. He lay with shut eyes, realising with some poignancy that the voice of a well-bred English girl is pure melody, the fragrance of her fresh and chaste as the fragrance of English wild-flowers. But the ladies he used to know were ladies. This half-boyish thing (though nice) was a forward hussy.

"I'd be more comfortable if you lifted

me on your arm," he said.

"Lift him, Pen," said Lady Penderby,

and Penderby did it.

"Dearest," said Jaffery, patting His Excellency's cheek. Pat giggled. His Excellency said:

"How long do you wish this disgusting exhibition to continue, Guenevere?" And Pat said with a cry as the car stopped:

"Oh . . . not here!"

It was one of the ordinary negro hovels strung along the roads between pine-apple patches and scraps of jungle overrun with vines and monstrous casuarines and breadfruits; mud walls patched with petroltins, rags and sticks, and a low thatch roof where chickens were scratching. The broken gate was tied up with an old necktie; the yard bloomed with smashed crockery, flattened tins, years of every kind of discard from the cabin, including a torn deck of cards, and two naked woolly-haired nigger babies lay on their stomachs by a dirty puddle where a lean pig was rooting. For the first time in years Jaffery distinctly felt shame. He descended with an effort at dignity.

"Summer residence"—he indicated the hovel with a waved hand. "Every Gov'nor has . . . sum-summer residence. Sorry can't ask you in. No wine . . . no chairs,

either."

His eyes met Pat's and suddenly fell. Good Lord! Her eyes were full of tears!

"Many thanks for the lift," he muttered, stumbling away. But habit was too strong. He came back. "If you could . . . small loan for a few days . . . until I can arrange with my bankers . . . ?"

"Pen," commanded Lady Penderby, and hurriedly dived into the car. Penderby dropped two half-crowns into the twitching

hand.

"Come near Government House again

and I'll deport you," he said.

"England, then," said Jaffery. "The Savoy, or I shan't go. Never did care much for the others, somehow."

He stood watching the cloud of dust whirling between the slender palms, the thick-ringed bread-fruit boles. What devil had made him antagonise this new man from the beginning? He might have sponged on him, helped and guided him as he had done Cummins. Might have talked with him the dear old jargon of the Public Schools . . . No; that was just what he had known that he could not do. Cummins, a decent stupid little man from nowhere, could be his friend. This man of his own class, his own caste, never could. Both would feel the shame of it.

He sighed, picked one of the babies out of the puddle, and walked into the hovel. There were few poor people on the Group who wouldn't house the Governor's friend when he asked for it, although they had been looking a bit askance since the new fellow came. fed him, gave him naked string-beds or clean sheets to sleep on, and stole drink for him from the back-doors of private houses or hotels. And when the rum-boats came down past Florida, chased by the American patrols, a keg or two usually reached Jaffery in some way. Hang it, why not? He had done plenty for all of 'em, bringing petitions before the Governor, advising and so on. He spoke to the great negress who sat all in a heap, stringing beans.

"My friends brought me home. Wanted me to stay for dinner, but I hadn't my dress-

suit."

"Yeah, sah. Dat was de Gub'ner foh sho," said Mrs. Blenker. Her first husband had been a Dutchman, and it was simpler to keep the name through all who came after.

"Nice chap," said Jaffery, swaggering.
"His wife, too. Nice girl." A sudden wave of clarity came over him. What was he doing, saying? God in heaven! Had he sunk to posing like this before a negress? "If ever I hear you say a word against Lady Penderby, I—I'll never help you again," he said fiercely. "We're not fit to lick her boots. No one is."

"Yeah, sah," said Mrs. Blenker.

Jaffery went and sat in the lean-to which was his sleeping-place (and that of the chickens), and he cried. Possibly he was merely weak from drink and illness. Possibly for the first time in many years he was strong enough to face himself.

Within the yellow adobe walls of Government House garden His Excellency walked among oleanders and tall trumpet-flowers and other un-English things very unhappily

through the next weeks. The Commissioner was (as usual) sick somewhere on the mainland where one could get ice. The small force at the Barracks was in command of a Major who knew no tongue but his own and by no means the best of that, and Government House was staffed only by a few secretaries. No aide for the Governor unless he took some callow sub from the Barracks. A one-horse place with a three-man job, groaned His Excellency. Yet, if a man made good here the British Government noticed him. "There's So-and-so put down an insurrection in that stinking hole, San Rozaire," they would say. "Let's move him up a step. Plenty more cubs coming on."

Penderby, hiding his troubles very inadequately from Pat, slaved like the good fellow he was. And looked straight through Jaffery, the only man who could have helped him, like the pig-headed Englishman he was. And grew daily more haggard over such little cross-word puzzles as rights between the islands over the bonito fishinggrounds; the claim of a family whose child had been killed by the fall of a three-hundredyear-old Dutch tower; the filth of backyards where fevers and skin-diseases throve and the sanitary officer stirred up more strife than anything else; the eternal wrangles for precedence among the wives of mongrel jacks-in-office, the endless intrigues, sporadic rebellions, smuggling-and a secretary who repeated like some parrot:

"Senhor, His Excellency left all that to Jaffery. Senhor, I do not know . . ."

Jaffery, who had devilled three hard years for Cummins and one for Payne-Munroe (who drank, so that no good came of it), chuckled often when Jorge told him of the Governor's worries. But one day he came to the Secretary so amazingly sober that Senhor Ramon Jorge was speechless.

"Dear man," said Jaffery in his pleasant way. "Do take your nursling off the bottle and give him something to cut his teeth

on, for he'll need them soon."

"You mean Maximilien?" said Jorge.

"I have told him oal about this Maximilien and how he make trouble of insurrection every time he come oaver from the mainland. Oah, yes. I have tell. And His Excellency say, 'Goa boil your head, I meet that when it come. Too busy now."

"Curse him," cried Jaffery in a sudden blaze. "Doesn't he consider his wife?" "Oah, yes, Senhor. Oaf course he do. Ver' nice lady."

"Consorting-or cavorting-with the new Governor hasn't improved your brains, Jorge," said Jaffery, and went away. It seemed to him, wakeful through the hot nights, quite incredible that Penderby could eat, sleep, play and work, go to dinners and dances, while danger was threatening his Of course, the fool did not know it, but that was no excuse with Jaffery keeping sober on purpose to tell him—and also because this last attack had left him so shaken that he dared not risk another with danger to Pat ahead. If he chose to call her Pat in his mind, who dared stop him? If every time he saw her afar he turned off into a chandoo-shop or a hovel so that she should not see him, and then followed her, who would say him nay? If through these breathless nights when he felt so very queer the moonlight through the cracks turned into her fair presence and stooped above him with healing wings, who knew but him-Hang it all; when a man has lost everything, surely he may worship moonlight through a crack in the wall.

One hot night she seemed so real, so tender, that Jaffery got his bare feet into old Chinese mules and followed out and over the scratched plots of maize and sugar-beet (where he lost both slippers) and down a close narrow bush-track full of wheeling bats to the sea. Tide was high and silent among the mangrove-roots that stood along the beach like a picket-fence, and out on the silence moved the sound of oars. Fishermen rowed out to set their nets sometimes by moonlight; or a roistering party would paddle about for fun. But this straight, hard, clean stroke meant smugglers, if Jaffery knew anything about it. And there, in the curve of that green point where the anchorage was good, lay a small steamboat. Rum? Tobacco and silks? Guns for Maximilien's little insurrection? Jaffery would have bet his shirt—but he only possessed a singlet just now—that it was guns. He waited, shivering in the foul smell from the stirred mud among the mangroves, until the boat returned laden, down to the gunwale. From where he was hid behind a clump of banana-palms he heard the talk. Bastard Mexican mixed with American slang; and that fellow who talked as though he had no roof to his mouth was Maximilien, who lost bits of himself in every insurrection and yet seemed to think it worth while.

They piled boxes on the strip of yellow sand and rowed away again. Jaffery came out to make sure. Ammunition. Guns. A small case of what was probably revolvers. Knives. . . . Quite suddenly the moonlight seemed shaping into Pat as he had last seen her through windows when he was sneaking round to the back door of Gregory, the very influential ship-chandler. Pat was dining there, in a pink frock like an English rose, and fair white flesh like pearly dew. Mouth like a rosebud; heaven's own blue for eyes . . . There . . . there she stood now, a wraith of flushed loveliness and merriment. And now she was gone. And there were the guns.

Suddenly Jaffery clapped his hands to his head and stumbled off along the forest track. So much to be swiftly done which his sodden brain did not know how to meet. And if his

didn't, nobody else's could.

Lady Penderby had a straight talk to His Excellency about Jaffery, and, learning that he considered Jaffery at the bottom of all the troubles, held her peace like a wise woman and talked to Jorge instead. Jorge told her any number of things, anxiously hoping that she might get Jaffery back.

Jaffery knew, said Jorge. He had lived so long in the West Indies that he had the feel of the people in his bones. He had a kind of antennæ for detecting intrigue and smoothing squabbles, and could prepare the most masterly method of procedure for Cummins. Jorge had seen him sit for an hour with his eyes shut, thinking out problems as though they were a game of chess, while Jorge got the heads of it on paper and Cummins acted as he was told, and everything came out all right.

"But the Senhor Jaffery had to have two ver' stiff pegs and sit in the Governor's desk-chair . . . the one that tips back," said Jorge. "Oah, yes. He mooch liked to sit there and pretend he was Governor. Once he told me he would die happy if he could be called His Excellency just once. But oaf course he was oanly the devil of His Excellency and not a ver' nice

man for a lady to know at oal."

"I love him, poor dear," cried Pat with

glowing eyes.

She sat thinking while Jorge shifted the papers on his desk with pudgy brown hands and thought how very strange and shocking they were, these English ladies. But nice. Oah, yess. . . .

Oah, yess. "Senhor Jorge," said Lady Penderby, rising. "If Mr. Jaffery comes again to see the Governor you can tell me instead.

Thank you."

She was gone without any explanation;

and that also was the way of the English and not so nice. Jorge mopped his forehead. Dios! Was he to be called on to assist an intrigue at his age and with his great family of angel children? These shameless English! He looked from the window on the dazzle of wide street with its bent adobe houses and a line of negresses passing, upright as columns, with huge baskets of bright gherkins and melons on their heads. Behind them shuffled a Chinaman in blue, and behind him came Maximilien, with a black beard hiding his ravaged face and his black eyes shaded by a sombrero. Jorge saw him most days now, but this thin, cat-footed Mexican always shocked him into real fear. Maximilien must be caught with the goods on him if he was to be put away for long, and this was what no one could ever do. Like a puff of wind he blew revolution into flame and then was gone in the smoke. And then did it over again elsewhere.

That week-end Jaffery appeared suddenly in the office, demanding the Governor. He looked very ill and was nearly

sober.

"Tell him to come at once," said Jaffery, quite in the old manner.

"I-I don't think he wants to see you

mooch," hesitated Jorge.

"Nor do I want to see him. But I must. Fetch him." Jaffery flung himself into the chair that tipped and went back with his heels on the desk. Jorge hurried across the courtyard with its tinkling fountain and stiff pots of camellias. Madre de Dios! Here was a fix for a man with angel children and a not quite so angel wife. So far as Jorge could see he was in the soup whichever he did, so he decided for the Governor's lady. Women could always get what they wanted.

Jaffery rose from the chair as Lady Penderby came in; greeted her courteously

and handed her to a chair.

"Where is Penderby? I have something very important to say?" he demanded, and frowned on hearing that he was playing cards at the Club.

"Will I do instead?" asked Pat, who had never wanted for intuition and realised how weakness and concentration were lifting the man into some rare atmosphere where his fogged brain could work clearly.

"Well, yes. I suppose so. It's only formula, anyway. He must do as he's told.

Jorge . . . hurry."

Jorge, who knew this formula, anyway,

brought bottles and seltzer. Jaffery tossed off a couple of glasses, tipped the chair back and began to speak. Jorge, humped at the far side of the desk, took notes. Pat, sitting with slim fingers clasped on her silken knees, listened. She heard of the smuggled ammunition, now in an old tower on the beach. Of how the insurrection would begin to-morrow night among the negroes in the Basri quarter-always a hotbed of trouble. Of how they would fire all the bonding-stores, sending every noaccount in the town mad among the barrels of spirits, the tobacco, the everything else. Of how, while the handful of military attempted to cope with that, Government House would be stormed by a picked few and Their Excellencies carried off to ransom. . . . "Which will be a good fat one. I hope all this is clear?"

"Quite, thank you," said Pat, very white

about the lips.

Jorge said nothing. He was writing it down. An excellent tool, Jorge. Jaffery closed his eyes, exhausted. He said dreamily:

"If I were His Excellency. Strange... Strange. To do decent work for years and have another reap..."

"Please continue, Your Excellency," said

Pat's clear tones.

"What?" Jaffery jumped. A dark flush stained his thin cheeks. "I—I—what did you say? Pardon me, but . . ."

"I said Your Excellency. You are, too.

What shall we do about this?"

"Jorge! You hear, Jorge! I'm recognised at last. An order has come from England. I regret that your husband has been superseded, Lady Penderby. I'll say all I can for him. But...oh, God! You don't know what this means to me, at last! At last!"

"I think I do," faltered Pat, frightened. What a fool she had been to say it when she only meant to pay a compliment. And

when he found out—

"Now we can get to work at once," said Jaffery, buttoning up his coat briskly. "That's what I came about. The ammunition is being removed to the Basri quarter to-night, and we'll need every man in Barracks to surround and nab them. It can be done. But only the Governor could order it on such short notice. Now I...

"Oh," cried Pat with sinking heart.
"But your—your appointment isn't yet.
... I mean it's not made public, you know, and ..."

"That's quite immaterial," said Jaffery,



smiling. "Get your husband. He'll take orders from me now, and he can be the mouthpiece. Jorge . . ."

mouthpiece. Jorge . . ."

Jorge was sitting with dropped jaw.
Such sudden happenings! Dios! What
was a man to think? It was quite right

and very good that Jaffery should be Governor, but such an unconstitutional way of doing things.... "Oah, yess. But I should have been informed through the proper channels," he protested. "Until this is confirmed I am not sure..."



"Jaffery turned a haggard face on Pat. 'You—you have not been——' He clutched the chair. His voice dropped. 'Not—joking with me?' he murmured."

"What? There's no mistake?" Jaffery turned a haggard face on Pat. "You you have not been-" He clutched the chair. His voice dropped. "Not-joking with me?" he murmured.

Pat, on her feet, was looking and feeling dazed. She ached with pity for this man, but more with terror for her husband. This thing must go through now, if she died for it.

"No, no. But this military attack?

it necessary . . . to-night?"

"The guns are still behind locked doors. Once they are distributed it will be difficult,

perhaps impossible. . . ."

"Yes, I see. But . . ." She bit her lips, trying to think clearly. "Why not just confiscate the ammunition and leave it at

"They would have another lot over in a few weeks . . . and we would not discover their plans next time."

"I see. And—and you think only the Governor could make Major Harrington turn out the men to-night?

"I am sure of it."

"Then," said Pat, "I'll get him. Wait

a few minutes."

Jaffery lay back with closed eyes. He was very tired. Jorge put a glass to his lips. He drained it and stood up to greet the Governor, who stood in the door in a dark serge suit with a cap pulled over his eyes. He hadn't realised that the fellow was so slim.

Then the cap came off and Pat said:

"I'll have to do instead. Tell me what

"You! What are you? ... Why, you're mad!" cried Jaffery, but Pat

"I am trusting you implicitly, Mr. Jaffery, and you must trust me. Do we

start now?"

Jaffery nodded. He could not speak. She was in no danger, of course. had to give the order and then come home. But what a gallant thing she was. a precious and lovely lady.

My husband would have gone with you . . . into danger," she told him in the car. "So I have said nothing to him. You see how I am trusting you, Mr. Jaffery?"

He felt her shivering in the hot night.

He said huskily:

"You will not regret it. Pretend you have a cold and don't speak much. There are . . . there are not many voices like yours. Just tell Major Harrington that I know all particulars and can guide him."

It was extraordinarily easy to obey Jaffery when he meant to be obeyed. But seeing the little company melt into the night shadows, Pat was taken with natural womanish terror and cried all the way home. Here she got into her own clothes and wandered about forlornly; hearing rifles crack in every wind-breath; seeing the trees tall and dark below the moonlight, and trying to visualise what was going on along the distant beaches. What if the whole thing was the distorted vision of a drunken man? Pen, her Pen . . . held up to ridicule or worse. Possibly superseded as having a wife dangerous to the public welfare. What if it was all too late, and the insurgents, hearing what was afoot, were even now running with the wild eyes of murder up from the lower town?

"Steady, Pat. Steady, you fool!" she

cried, wringing her hands.

But she faced her terror alone, and she did not send for Pen, who would at once have set off for the beach. His life should be saved, at any rate. "But oh, what have I done? What have I done?" she moaned.

Down on the mangrove beach very much was being done. A bloody fight raged under the careless moon, back among the allspice bushes and the broad whipping banana leaves and down into the mud among the mangrove roots where great pale crabs scuttled with goggling eyes.

And then it was over, and well over, with prisoners marching back to Barracks under guard and the Major extraordinarily pleased with himself. But Jaffery, lying on the trampled grass, saw the moonbeams turn again to Pat and murmured:

"Bless you, sweetness. Did it for you, you know. We pulled it off, didn't we?" Again he was asking that, looking up from rugs and pillows on a floor; and now it really was Pat, white as moonbeams, stooping low to him and saving:

"Yes, Your Excellency. We pulled it off, and splendidly—thanks to you."

Jaffery smiled. Into his eyes came a look, tender, whimsical.

"Kiss me, Hardy," he murmured. And with her soft pitying lips on his forehead Jaffery went on to pull off greater things elsewhere.

OLD PRINGLE'S LAST BRIEF

By ANDREW SOUTAR

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

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I was a tragic story that Maclean, the solicitor, narrated, and, as he said, deliberately left incomplete lest the feelings of the listener be harrowed unduly. After all, the point or moral of it is bound up in that age-worn question: "Should the doctor (or the lawyer) tell?" Or, "Should counsel, knowing his client to be guilty of the charge preferred, use his eloquence and argumentative powers to secure his acquittal?"

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As Maclean said, in prefacing his story, there are many eminent members of the Bar who will refuse to accept a brief in behalf of a person who admits his guilt in the privacy of a lawyer's office, but relies on professional etiquette for secrecy. To defend a man whom one knows to be guilty and to strive to saddle the blame on some person unknown does seem to place one in the category of accessories after the fact.

Old Pringle, K.C., was neither eminent nor mediocre. There were cleverer juniors practising in Criminal Law, but none so earnestly, none so ambitious, none so unfortunate in falling foul of the presiding judge. Pringle lost case after case in a most exasperating manner: always there seemed to be some flaw in his line of argument. agents, Maclean and Coverdale, had been very loyal to the old fellow, briefing him again and again after some of the most disheartening failures. He, himself, knew that their patience couldn't last much longer, and the dignified, even patronising, attitude he used to adopt towards them in the early days had changed to ingratiating smiles. He would listen to "the regrets of our client, Mr. Pringle," strive hard to appear indifferent to the complaints, then venture some story or reminiscence to put the office in a good and forgiving humour. In his youth he had been a stalwart in athletics; he had

ridden his point-to-point race over a stiff country; he kept himself informed in 'Varsity sporting news of the day; his boy, Ambrose, was one of the rugger "lights" of his year—" extraordinary clever three-quarter," he would say, "and gets speedier every day." Even to the clerks in the office of Maclean and Coverdale, Old Pringle would let himself go on matters of sport. They liked the old fellow, but they were sorry for him.

"Often," said Maclean, "I saw poor Pringle sitting in Fountain Court and gazing at the water. You could tell by the movements of his head that he was visualising some game—a hurdle race, or a swimming match, or a rugger game. Sometimes his boy Ambrose would be with him. Great pals! I don't think the old man had a happy married life; in fact, I've been told that she left him soon after the boy was born; but that has nothing to do with the story of the Bleecher trial for murder. We briefed him, but it was the last time."

The Bleecher case (according to Maclean) was a colourful affair. The setting of the drama was a flamboyant night club run by a picturesque French-adventurer known as Dubois. The West End gave the place extravagant patronage in spite of the three or four police raids which had figured in its brief history. The food procurable in the dining-room of "The Topaz" couldn't have been bettered in any hotel or club in Europe; the cabaret was as artistic as it was expensive; the dance floor was superb, the orchestra famous. There was nothing rapacious about the prices charged: Dubois, a rather slightly-built dandy of a fellow, knew how to hold a clientele together once he had won their approbation.

It was in the card-room that the Frenchman made his profits. For he could handle





a card with the elegance with which he kissed the tips of a lady's fingers.

One night Dubois was found strangled in that very room!

Within an hour after the discovery of the tragedy the police had arrested Wilfred Bleecher, who was still on the club premises although dawn had long since broken.

Now, most of the members of "The Topaz" knew Bleecher. Hitherto they had regarded him as a delightful, gentlemanly fellow whose manners were a pattern of

correctness. Always it had been assumed that he was a well-to-do man who could afford to lose a few hundreds at baccarat without developing a temperature.

It may not be just—in law it isn't—to dig up a man's past before he enters the dock to take his trial. But it may be taken for granted that in nine cases of ten the story gets around, as it did in the case of Bleecher. Horror was professed when it was divulged that he had been in the hands of the police on several occasions.

He had plenty of money for his defence and it was in the hands of Maclean and Coverdale that he placed himself when arrested. The circumstantial evidence was damning. It was known that he was in the card-room with Dubois; there was a third, but he had disappeared and none of the club members could give him a name, for it was the first time he had visited "The Topaz," and then he was Bleecher's guest. Even the waiter who took wine to the cardroom couldn't help the police. He was very tired, he said, after a long and arduous night; the players had dwindled to three, but for an hour there had been no call for further refreshment. The police were satisfied that this waiter was in nowise hiding anything, for he was known to be a special favourite of Dubois and would have been the first to bring the guilty person to justice if it had lain in his power.

Maclean and Coverdale were reluctant to brief Old Pringle, but they heard that he was in fairly low water; moreover, he sank a little of his professional pride by hurrying to their office and begging for the chance.

"I've had a deal of bad luck," he said, "and I'd like to prove that it is only bad luck. I've read all the newspapers have to say about the case, and I've had a chat with an inspector friend of mine. Sincerely, I believe I can get an acquittal if my private information is correct." He added: "When you've seen Bleecher again, I'd like you to fix up an appointment. He'll come up before the Bench to-day; he'll be committed to the Assize which opens on Thursday. He'll plead not guilty, of course. But I must see him the moment after he's committed for trial."

"He stands a very slim chance," they warned him. "It may mean another failure for you."

Old Pringle's eyes glowed.

"But if I win," he said, "it will mean more than you can imagine." He wiped the corners of his eyes, complaining that he must change his oculist. "So many failures!" he sighed. "Yes, I can do with a mark on the credit side."

So they gave him the brief, and in due course he had an interview with the accused.

Wilfred Bleecher was a handsome man, polished of speech and manner and, apparently, without the slightest weakness in his nervous system. Here, thought Old Pringle, as he studied him, was the born gambler. Steel-blue eyes, straight lips, firm though soft of voice. Calm of demeanour; ready

to face any ordeal without the semblance of a flinch.

The conversation was terse.

"I want the truth," said Old Pringle.
"I'm fighting for your life and my reputation. That confession may be illuminating.
How long had you been in the club that
night?"

"From eleven till two the next morning

when the murder was committed?"

"How do you know it was murder?"
Bleecher studied every line in Old Pringle's face before replying:

"You're my counsel, therefore I may

treat you with absolute confidence?"

"Absolutely."

"Nothing that I say to you can be used against me at my trial?"

"Nothing," said Old Pringle. "This is

a privileged occasion."

"Good," said Bleecher. "Well, I know it was murder, because I was there when it was committed!"

"Who killed Dubois?" asked Old Pringle. Not a muscle of his face had moved while Bleecher was making the dramatic statement. "You must know if you were there. Who killed him?"

"I did," said Bleecher calmly.

"You strangled him?"

"Yes and no," said Bleecher. "I didn't strangle him with my own hands!"

"That's absurd."

"It's the truth. If it hadn't been that I distrust the police and stipendiaries and ordinary magistrates, I could have proved the other day that it wasn't my hand that strangled Dubois. I didn't ask any questions—just let them commit me. I preferred to be tried by a jury. I was amazed that neither the police nor the doctor who examined the body found it necessary to ask the question: 'Was the man who strangled Dubois left-handed or right-handed?' Fancy omitting a feature like that!"

"I have a photograph of the body," said Old Pringle. "Would you care to examine

it with me?"

"Anything you like," said Bleecher carelessly. "You will see by the marks, especially the thumb-mark, that the murderer was a right-handed man."

"Well?" Old Pringle looked up from

the photograph.

Bleecher held out his right hand.

"Try to bend those fingers," he said.
"You can't. The muscles were cut in an accident twelve months ago—(I haven't been in trouble during that time, so the police know

nothing about it). It would be a physical impossibility for me to grasp anything with those fingers, but—I could strangle an elephant with my left."

elephant with my left."
Old Pringle nodded. "Go on," he said; and he was deeply impressed. Here, he thought, was a complete answer to the

charge, but-

"Why do you say that you did it?"

and the luck is against me, I'm not going to squeal."

"Î'm defending you," said Old Pringle curtly. "Explain how you strangled this

man in the circumstances."

"First," said Bleecher calmly, "let me tell you of the other fellow. I bumped against him in the saloon bar of the Star Theatre. He was taking a look at life,



"'It would be a physical impossibility for me to grasp anything with those fingers."

he asked. "Are you shielding someone?"
"No," said Bleecher. "I've told you the truth. There was a third person present, but he didn't do it. Let me explain; then I'll leave it to you to frame the right line of defence. It would be quite easy to shift the blame to the shoulders of the other man, but I'm a gambler—I hope I'm a good gambler. If the cards are squarely dealt

wanted to see all there was to be seen. You know the type. He hadn't been inside a night club. I took him under my wing because he appeared to be a trifle merry and there were several of the 'boys' around. They would have 'gone over him' if they could have got him to one of their Soho sinks. We had one or two drinks together, talked the usual rot, and finished up by

calling each other 'Bleechey' and 'Kid.' I didn't know him from Adam. We went to 'The Topaz,' had a little supper, and eventually went upstairs to the card-room on the invitation of Dubois.

"It was a quiet night: inside half an hour there were only the three of us playing -Dubois, the Kid and myself."

Old Pringle interrupted:

"Could this Kid, as you call him, play? You know what I mean. He was able to take care of himself?"

"Don't forget," said Bleecher, "that he'd had one or two and wasn't quite clear in his mind."

he'd learned.

"He had plenty of money?" Old Pringle asked.

"It looked like money," said Bleecher, and smiled.

"And the game?"

"We tried baccarat and drifted by easy stages to the ancient 'poker.' The Kid seemed to have that well taped. We started as gently as a summer wind, but it was blowing a hurricane before we'd been at it a couple of hours. Dubois hated the game, but he had no alternative to going on. was then that he started to play the 'dirt'; and it was the Kid who saw through it first: I was a bit hazy. It happened that I owed Dubois something like four thousand and he was pressing me. The luck was slimy; I couldn't get a break. The Kid couldn't go wrong. If Dubois had a 'full house,' it was a thousand to one that the Kid was sitting with 'fours' up his sleeve.

"Dubois tried to fill him with fire-water, and when I protested he lost his head and threw some hasty words at me about the money I owed him. I lost my temper—and that's unusual in me. The Kid lost his temper, too. Dubois accused him of not playing straight. And both the Kid and I knew that Dubois was trying every trick

"Then came the 'rough house.' were only the three of us in the room and the Kid was pretty far gone: I fancy that the wine had been monkeyed with. I don't know. Anyway, Dubois jumped up from his chair, called the Kid a sharper and swung a flat hand at him. The Kid shot up from his chair as though he'd been stung by a whole hive of wasps. Dubois backed into a corner of the room. The Kid grabbed at his throat with his right hand. Nine men in ten do that when they're 'roughing,' although nine of ten don't intend to do more than hold their man.

" Dubois' head went back against the wall, his chin up in the air. I was immediately behind the Kid, holding him up against

Dubois as you might say.

"Dubois-do try to get this situation-Dubois brought up his left fist in an uppercut. It was a perfect blow and took the Kid full on the point. He was out, but I was still behind him, still holding him up."

And his hand was still on Dubois'

throat!

"It was then that I saw red. It was the four thousand owing to Dubois, the crook, that helped me to make up my mind. The fingers of the Kid were relaxed for a second: I pressed my left hand on his! Get the The Kid was practically unconscious and couldn't have realised what was happening. I pressed hard, and, as I told you just now, this left hand of mine could strangle an elephant.

It was easy. The hand of the Kid strangled Dubois, leaving the marks, as you have seen on the photograph. But it was I who did it. And it wasn't till the two of them slipped in a heap to the floor that I realised that the police couldn't bring it home to me when the medical evidence showed that my right hand couldn't strangle

a mosquito."

Old Pringle was absorbed. It was just one of those dramatic stories that would excite the newspapers; they would make much of it, and the name of the defending counsel would be brought prominently before the public.

"And you say you had no idea what became of the other man—the Kid"? he

asked.

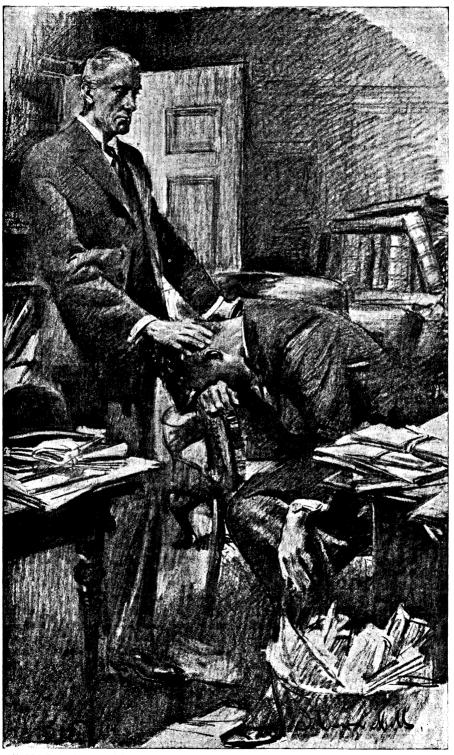
"Not the slightest," said Bleecher. "But if I know my man he's out of the country by this time. Come to think of it, there was a Chicago look about him. I'm sorry for him in a way. It's bound to follow him. You know that. Cheat the police out of a victim of any calibre and they'll search every dope-house in the world until they find a substitute. I do not love the police, Mr. Pringle."

"You must dismiss from your mind all thoughts of your companion on that night," said Old Pringle. "You are fighting for

your life."

"And your reputation," said Bleecher, as though he didn't intend to let the old man forget that.

The trial worked out exactly as Old Pringle had anticipated. If he had been in a position to engage a publicity expert he



"Old Pringle urged him into his own chair and stood beside him, a hand resting on the boy's head. He didn't speak—he couldn't."

couldn't have received-more notice in the The crowded court listened to him as they would to the unfolding of a Drury Lane melodrama. The members of the Bar who were present found themselves whispering to each other that the old lion had taken a fresh lease of life. They were glad of it; their rapt attention was a tribute to him. And never in all his career had Old Pringle touched eloquence so surely as he did in his speech for the defence after he had taunted the police and the medical witnesses with what he called "slipshod methods." It was inconceivable to his mind, he said, that they should have overlooked the deformity from which Bleecher suffered. There had been demonstrations in court: two doctors had examined the right hand of the accused and confessed that it was an impossibility to flex the fingers. The jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty, and everybody left the court with the impression firmly fixed on the mind that the real criminal had been allowed to escape from the club and was now probably far from the reach of the law.

Maclean and Coverdale were generous in their praise of Old Pringle, and he bristled with pride. On the morning following the trial he walked through Fountain Court as usual, his head held high, his eyes sparkling. He sat down on the public bench to watch the sparrows sipping from the edge of the miniature lake; several well-known barristers passed by and gave him a polite nod of recognition. It was his old friend, Major Dinsdale, who had often sat with him there. that set him thinking. The Major was making his way to the bench when he saw Pringle: their glances met; then the Major deliberately turned on his heel and walked away.

"That's strange," Old Pringle thought. Then he remembered that he and the Major had discussed this very problem at Lord's one afternoon, when the Major's nephew was playing for Eton against Harrow. The Major had been very severe in his condemnation of any counsel who was tempted by a fee to defend a criminal whom he knew to be guilty. But could the Major possibly know about the inner history of this case? "I'm too sensitive," said Old Pringle to himself. "I'm putting thoughts into the Major's head, and probably his only trouble is liver."

All the same, he felt depressed, but he couldn't have said why. He went to his chambers in Elm Court and read again all the morning newspapers which contained an

account of the trial of Bleecher: there were many tributes to his masterly handling of the case. One particular reporter had written that Mr. Pringle's conduct of the case for the defence had never been equalled even by the late Sir Ernest Munchell, who was regarded as the leading man of his time!

Old Pringle was still in his chambers when Wilfred Bleecher called to thank him again for all he had done. It might not be etiquette to receive him there, but praise was sweet to the soul.

"I'm leaving the country," said Bleecher, but I couldn't go without telling you how grateful I am." He looked around at the dust-covered tomes, the old quill pens on the table covered with cheap American cloth, the old sporting prints on the dusty walls, the frowsy hangings that separated the "private" office from the den in which the clerks worked—when he had any. "I don't suppose I shall see you again," said Bleecher, "but I shall often think of you, and if ever I can put any business in your way, trust me to do it."

"Damn the man," thought Old Pringle; "he takes me for a tradesman."

Bleecher held out a hand, but Pringle didn't shake it. Again, he couldn't have advanced a reason if he had been challenged.

"I don't know everything about the law," said Bleecher as he turned to the door, "but I know a little. A man can't be tried twice on the same charge—can he?"

"No," said Old Pringle. "You are a free man, Mr. Bleecher. You have every reason to be grateful."

"I am," said Bleecher, and took his leave. Old Pringle waited half an hour, then went for a walk along the Embankment. The feeling of exultation that had stirred him during the morning was gone. The face of the Major haunted him. All the arguments which the Major had advanced that day at Lord's came flooding back to mind. He had fought for the life of a man who had frankly confessed that he was guilty of murder! Well, scores of barristers had done precisely the same thing and would continue to do it. Sentiment was utterly opposed to success in this profession. Counsel was privileged. His mind swung again to the position of the other man, the Kid. He was free; but how long would he remain free?

Confound the Major! Confound this silly, sickly sentiment that was getting the better of him! Why should he worry himself with what anybody thought, even if they

should know the facts—and that wasn't likely?

It was dark when he returned to his chambers in Elm Court. As he made his way up the rickety, winding stairs to the second floor, he fancied he saw a shadow move in one of the many recesses: it gave him a start, but he chided himself an instant later. Inside his office, he lit the single gasjet and sat down at his desk. The litter of papers and pencils and quills was indicative of his position. To-morrow, figuratively, all would be changed. Briefs would pour in; he would engage a junior; he would flourish.

He unlocked a drawer that was almost sacred to him. He took out a bundle of letters, untied the red tape that bound them and began to turn them over. Letters from Ambrose! Letters from the secondary college when he was a mere boy. Letters from Oxford! And all of them breathed the same spirit: Pride in his father!

"What does it matter, pater, if briefs don't come in as frequently as tradesmen's bills? To me, you sit on the Woolsack. You have always been so fair, so just, so honourable in your profession!"

Ah! What would the boy say if he learned the truth of this latest "triumph?" He was bound to read of it in the newspapers. To-morrow there would be a letter of congratulation from him. It would beginoh, he knew how it would begin:

"Pater, old dear! I wish I could have been there to shine in your reflected

glory . . ."

Old Pringle tied up the letters and replaced them in the drawer. There was a suspicious sparkle in his eyes; there were peculiar

shadows under them, but perhaps that was due to the wretched gas-light in that antiquated, dilapidated hole of an office which was supposed to be steeped in tradition.

It was late. Other offices and chambers in the Court were closed. Old Pringle remained seated at his desk, a quill pen in his right hand, as though he were engaged on some important piece of work.

There came a knock at the door, a timid, uncanny knock. And before Old Pringle could rise from his chair the door was opened. He cried out in alarm, dismay:

"Ambrose! My dear Ambrose! My boy! What in the name of heaven has

happened?"

For Ambrose was haggard; his eyes protruded. His hands shook as he extended them towards his father.

He cried out in a weak, broken voice: "Pater! Oh God, pater, help me!"

Old Pringle urged him into his own chair and stood beside him, a hand resting on the boy's head. He didn't speak—he couldn't.

Pater! I'm done, done! That affair at the Topaz Club! . . . Fool, fool that I was. I came down from Oxford, pater, to have a look around. I was coming to you afterwards, but I met—I met a fellow who took me there.... Pater, that case in which you appeared.... I—I was the other man in the room. . . . Pater, why don't you say something?"

Old Pringle didn't say a word. He was looking at the dusty wall in front of him. Tears were trickling down his cheeks, trickling and running in quick little jerks. The hissing of the defective gas-jet was louder than the applause in court had been.

THE CHIMES.

IF all these bells were still, no chimes to call Across the dewy morning fields, how sad Would be that stillness! If, at evenfall, No bells sang "Come!" could even lambs be glad? If all these bells were still, what sodden gloom Would trail along the furrow with the plough! If all these bells were still, could any bloom Lift up its glory on the apple-bough? If all these bells were still, what other sound Could fill the aching hollows of the air? Oh, how the yearning hummocks of the ground Would miss the steps that hastened once to prayer! If all these bells were still, no thrush or wren Could make up for that loss to hearts of men.

L. MOULTON.



TOURIST: Isn't it time you cut that hay?
FARMER: Not while second-hand golf balls fetch what they do!



"Henry came to the table and leaned over his brother's shoulder to study the strange collection of hieroglyphics."

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE BALANCE SHEET. By Cynthia Cornwallis.

CYNTHIA looked very worried: she nibbled the end of her pen-holder and counted on her fingers, stopping now and then to add figures to the column on the sheet of paper. Some she erased in despair, some she added to, but the

result did not appear to be satisfactory.
"I never could add up," she said impatiently, "and I warned them what would happen if they made me treasurer of the Fête, and it has."

"Has what?" asked Edward absently.

"Happened," replied his sister.

"What's happened?" asked Henry densely. Cynthia sighed heavily. "I can't get my sim right. The balance is wrong. I appear to have more in the cash-box than I ought."

"I shouldn't worry about that," said Henry:

"it sounds very pleasant."

"Did you take the housekeeping money out of the cash-box before you put in the Fête money?" asked Doris anxiously.

"That's just it," replied Cynthia. "Did I pay old Mary for the chickens out of the house

money, or did I pay her out of the money for three concert tickets someone thrust upon me in the village? And there was 2s. 4d. on the kitchen shelf, and 3s. 1d. in the bureau drawer."

"Yes," assented Doris, "I remember perfectly. You were going to buy stamps and you didn't. There was 1s. 11½d. on the writingtable, and 8d. in Henry's christening mug as well on Friday."

"Is it still there?" asked Cynthia doubt-

"Very likely," yawned Doris.

"Because if it is," said Cynthia wisely, "it can't be here, and I'm as badly off as ever."

"On the contrary," corrected Henry, "you are better off if your balance is on the right

"Let me help," suggested Edward. "Now then, what is this?"

"Cash," replied Cynthia.
"I see," said Edward, "and this, I take it, is the list of stalls and what each took? It's all quite simple.'

"Not really," objected Cynthia. "Some of

it is mine, as I gave them all change to begin with, and if I didn't pay old Mary with the money for the concert tickets that is there—seven shillings. And Lady Smythe-Burlington gave me a subscription to the Waifs and Strays which I refused to take, and . . ."

"How much was it?" interrupted Edward.
"It's easy to subtract the amount from the

total."

Cynthia considered for a moment. "No," she said with an air of relief. "That's all right.

I'm sure I refused to take it. . . ."

Henry came to the table and leaned over his brother's shoulder to study the strange collection of hieroglyphics that represented Cynthia's balance sheet. "Come to think of it," he murmured reflectively, "I found 7s. 8d. in my christening mug this morning, and, being hard up, and its being my mug when all is said and done . . ."

Edward interrupted the reproaches that were hurled at Henry. "Come on," he said sternly, "let's get on with the business. Here's the

cash and here's the list."

"But it was the money for Mrs. Jones's

concert tickets!" stormed Cynthia.

"Then you didn't pay Mary with it," exclaimed Doris brightly. "So now you know there was seven shillings less in the cash. Splendid!"

"Do I add it on or subtract it?" asked Edward wildly. His brain was getting dazed.

When the point was settled, Henry offered to

count the coppers.

"I don't know that we ought to let you," objected Edward. "We don't know how many there are."

"That's why I suggested counting them," replied Henry blandly, ignoring the base insinuation.

"Let me do the threepenny bits; I love threepenny bits," said Doris eagerly.

"That's just it!" retorted Henry. "Can we trust you?"

His wife rose swiftly, and inserted a threepenny bit between his collar and the back of his neck, pushing it beyond recall.

"You're a thoroughly dishonest pair," remarked Cynthia, piling up half-crowns in

little heaps.

"Here we have £5 2s. 4d. for garden produce," said Edward. "Is that there?"

"I expect so," replied Cynthia.

"And seven and six for ginger beer?" went on Edward, checking the list.

"Probably," replied Cynthia.

"But you must know," said Edward severely.

Cynthia gave him three half-crowns. "It was chiefly pennies," she said; "and Henry's counting them, but here you are, 7s. 6d., gingerbeer."

"It's all very slipshod," grumbled Edward.
"I'd like to know which was which."

"I'll let you know when I come across any that smell of ginger-beer," said Henry obligingly, "but it would be easier if they were hermings"

"Shut up!" hissed Doris, putting her fingers in her ears. "53, 54, 55,—55 threepenny bits. 12 into 55..."

"Does that include the one down my back?" asked Henry. "Hallo! These are the gingerbeer pennies, they're all wet."

"Fool!" retorted Cynthia. "Those are out

of the bucket."

"Bucket?" echoed Henry.

"Oh, yes," said Edward, looking up from his paper. "That was one of Cynthia's brilliant thoughts, or dishonest impulses—depends which way you look at it. As a matter of fact, most of those pennies are mine. First of all she requested me to drop half a crown in a bucket of water on the understanding that I had only to drop a penny on it in order to get it back. Sounds simple, doesn't it?"

"Very," agreed Henry, "except that, knowing Cynthia, you might have suspected a snag

somewhere."

"Until yesterday," said Edward sadly, "I never fully plumbed the depths of her depravity. I spent a fruitless half-hour trying to retrieve my half-crown by dropping pennies on it before I realised that I was being exploited as a decoy, and that other fools were being attracted to Cynthia's bucket. The crowning point of the swindle was that when the bucket had about 10s. worth of coppers in it some yokel fellow dropped a penny straight on top of my halfcrown. Cynthia shrieked with joy, turned out the bucket over my new white tennis shoes, presented the yokel with my half-crown, collared all the pennies, and demanded another halfcrown to begin all over again. I wasn't having any, I assure you, so I sent the Vicar to her, and came home to change my shoes and socks."

"Three pounds, four and fourpence three farthings," announced Henry from the hearth-

Edward sighed. "Here's the list and here's the cash," he repeated. "Now we'll begin and go right through."

"Here's the Vicar!" exclaimed Doris.

"Mercy!" gasped Cynthia in a panic. "How awful! Supposing anything's wrong with the accounts? Oh, I did want to get all tidied up and sorted out before he came."

Henry rose from the hearthrug with a paper

bag containing all the coppers.

As he placed the bag on the table it burst and the coppers cascaded over the table. Cynthia leapt forward and collided with Doris, who fell over Henry's feet, and sprawled against the table, the gate legs of which suddenly collapsed, and an avalanche of money descended to the floor.

"Ah," said Henry pleasantly as the Vicar entered the room. "Good morning, Vicar; you're just in time to help Cynthia with her accounts. Edward has the list, and here"—he indicated the money rolling in all directions—"we have the cash!"



"'Ah,' said Henry pleasantly. 'Good morning, Vicar; you're just in time to help Cynthia with her accounts.'"

MY INCOME-TAX RETURN. By W. E. Richards.

THE CEDARS, ACACIA AVENUE.

To H.M. Inspector of Taxes. DEAR OLD BEAN,

Thanks awfully for yours to hand. I note your hint that you desire a reply within twentyone days, but I never keep my friends waiting as long as that. You know, your collectors are a little more brusque. They expect a reply in fourteen days (with remittance enclosed), and they are not nearly so helpful as you are. It would never occur to them to send along a nice little brochure with instructions, although I

truthfully say of Joan "upon whose services I am compelled to depend by reason of old age or infirmity." That doesn't quite fit Joan. She is not really helpful in old age or infirmity. Indeed one has to be quite well to stand Joan.

I have stated "nature of infirmity" as requested. Nothing serious. I catch it every summer—with the hay, you know. I shouldn't have mentioned it had you not put the question.

I like your concession of "Relief for Female Relative" and I shall claim under that head. I don't think female relatives ought to visit for more than thirteen consecutive weeks. I mean Aunt Tabitha, of course. Practically she lives here, and I am glad you consider this a



A HINT TO THE HALLS.

Now that almost every form of sport has been tried on the music-halls, why not turn to account the undoubted popularity of watching other people work?

don't quite like the cold and official way you refer to me as "the individual" as if I were a complete stranger. Who would realise from this that we were old correspondents who exchanged chatty notes during the whole of last tax year? Not even a "wife (income nil)" has probed deeper into the secrets of my life and pass-book.

You will note that I've made rather a mess of page 4. The heading calls for "Name of daughter, maintained at my own expense—" and I shoved Joan's name down, because that describes her exactly. I feel I ought to have an allowance for Joan; she is such a terrible expense. But when I read the rest of the heading I found I had made a mistake. I can't

case where justice should be tempered with mercy. Of course, if Aunt Tabitha goes away, I'll write you at once, and gladly pay any additional assessment you care to make. It will be worth it.

Sorry, old man. I've only just caught sight of your note. I might have known there was a catch in it. If it is only for Widowers, what value has the concession at all? Do you think that any widower dare stay in the same house as Aunt Tabitha?

The children, you will be pleased to know, are as usual. Peter is over sixteen this year, but I've put him down. He is not actually "receiving full time instruction at an educational establishment" at the moment. He would be



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but for an attack of tonsilitis. You don't mind Peter appearing in Column 1 in the circumstances? I want to make it absolutely clear. I shouldn't like you to imprison me, "on summary conviction, for a term not exceeding six months with hard labour," just because I'd said Peter was at school when he is actually sucking a clinical thermometer upstairs.

You may perhaps notice, if you recollect our exchange of courtesies last year, that my list of "Dependent Relatives" has increased. You see, I did not realise that I could claim an allowance on them, but I won't trouble you to refund the tax I paid in error. It was all my fault. I

when they come of age. It was high time this allowance for dependent relatives was made.

Do you mind sending me another form? I find I've forgotten my nieces, and they're nearly as expensive as nephews, with their tennis rackets, lipsticks and cigarettes. Please send one with a specially large opening for dependent relatives.

GEO. HOPKINS.

THE CEDARS, ACACIA AVENUE.

To H.M. Inspector of Taxes.

Your curt note of even date to hand. If you



A FAIR INFERENCE.

FIRST CHARWOMAN (to second ditto): I ain't saying as 'ow you pinched the soap. All I say is a bar was missing, and you looked as if you'd 'ad a wash when you came this morning!

am glad the Government realites what a drain relatives are on one's purse.

Nephews, for instance. I never knew anybody collect so many nephews as I do. Nobody consults me or asks me whether I want another nephew. They just present him to me, drop him into my lap, and say, "Here's your new nephew."

As a business man you will realise how the silver christening mugs, the Teddy Bears, the Dismal Desmonds, the toy motors, and footballs mount up. Just now they all want real cricket bats, autographed by Jack Hobbs, and before very long they will expect something special

are not satisfied with contents of previous form, please be good enough to fill it up in your own way.

You will, no doubt, overcharge me as usual.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant, GEO. HOPKINS.

888

THE PRETTY APPLICANT: I've done a good deal of chorus work and small parts. Would you care to see my press notices?

THE PRODUCER: Never mind the press notices. We take the girls at their face value.

ALL AUG 14 1929 MAGAZINE





THE OLD KNIFE BOARD BUS

the clumsy contraption of Victorian days, witnessed the birth of Wright's Coal Tar Soap. More interesting still, Victorians used Wright's freely.

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The Mindsor Magazine.

No. 416.

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H.R.H. AS COLONEL OF THE WELSH GUARDS.

Edward P.

A NEW AND INTIMATE LIFE STORY OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

EVELYN GRAHAM

Continued from last month's issue.

IX.

FROM A.D.C. TO H.R.H.

OVEMBER 11th, 1918, saw His Royal Highness entering Valenciennes at the head of the Canadian troops, as a tribute to the way in which the British Dominions had rallied to the call in France, and also as a foretaste of those duties which were to occupy so large a portion of his time in future and to enhance his popularity so greatly outside the home country.

The coming of peace did not by any means end the war activities of His Royal Highness, for he was identified in the eyes of the nation with the fighting services, and it was clearly impossible for him to depart immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. Therefore the three or four months after the Armistice were occupied by the Prince in a manner that was some sort of compromise between his war activities in France and in England. He attempted to pay some personal attention

to every branch of the fighting forces, and from every part of the globe. Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Americans, Englishmen, French, Serbs, Italians—all came in for some crumbs of his company, and all went away with golden opinions of his tact.

Christmas, 1918, found him, not in England, where the festivities of the first peace-time Christmas for four years were taking place, but in Brussels, where he spent a short stay incognito, though the meaning of this term with regard to His Royal Highness is a little difficult to fathom.

His first duties in France were to visit the Colonial troops, not only to thank them for what they had done during the War, but to get to know them personally to some extent, in order to prepare himself for the tours which were to follow. In January, 1919, he was at Australian headquarters, living just like an officer of the A.N.Z.A.C.'s, except that his duties were more social and

less circumscribed, as they involved chiefly being seen by the men, meeting them as a private individual, and endeavouring to get a grasp of their home conditions, psychology, and point of view. The esteem in which the Prince and the Australian troops held each other was mutual, since even after his more or less inconspicuous position during the War His Royal Highness found the breezy democracy of the Colonials a pleasant change from the underlying mediæval spirit of reverence for royalty in the average English-The Colonials, for their part, found a complete lack of ostentation, and an ability to say the mot juste to each individual man he met, which his recent four years' practice had given him.

After the Australians, the Prince paid a quick visit to the American Army of Occupation on the Rhine.

There was a great dinner, at which both hosts and guest paid tribute to the bond of union between the two great countries. Next day was occupied by a visit to the 4th Corps, under General Muir, and an official luncheon there, followed by return to Coblenz and a visit to the Officers' Club Ball, where His Royal Highness danced with a number of American nurses. The letters that went to the United States from his fortunate partners did almost as much to support Anglo-American friendship as the visit itself.

Next came the turn of New Zealand for a visit, after that the Scottish regiments stationed near Namur, and then the Welsh.

Paris was the final port of call for the Prince in his Continental wanderings: Queen Elena of Italy was there, and Alexander, Prince of Servia, and M. and Mme. Poincaré all took a reunion lunch as a token of mutual respect and esteem. To complete the social round of a now post-war Paris, Lord Derby at the British Embassy held a dinner-party and a reception that was in all particulars a model for the Society novels of future generations. The recollections and publicity of this brief, brilliant social round were made none the less vivid by a visit that His Royal Highness paid to the Press Club in the Champs Elysées, where the French Government had provided a meeting-place for those journalists from all over the world who would be visiting Paris for the forthcoming Peace Conference.

A T last, in March, H.R.H.'s peace-time duties in France seemed to be over, and he was able to return to England, where

the people were waiting for an opportunity to feed their loyalty again by sight and sound of the Heir Apparent to the Throne. After one final duty to the Allies in the form of attendance and a speech at a farewell dinner to Colonel Endicott, Commander of the American Red Cross for Great Britain, given at the Royal Automobile Club, the Prince settled down to devote his attention to, and do his duty by, the people at home in Wales, Scotland, and England.

In July, 1919, H.R.H. visited Edinburgh in order to receive the freedom of the city. At the station, where enormous crowds had gathered to see him off, the spontaneous tribute to his popularity was not quite happily chosen, as the more musical of the enthusiasts there gathered broke out into the fine old favourite song, "Will ye no' come back again?" which was perhaps an error of tact to address to the scion of the Hanoverian line—but democratic monarchies have little to do with dynasties.

Plymouth also admitted His Royal Highness to its roll of freemen. He was already High Steward of the town, and as Duke of Cornwall may be considered to have a territorial interest in the West of England.

London was even more lavish in its honours, admitting him a freeman of the City, an Elder Brother of Trinity House, and a Bencher of the Middle Temple—three mediæval offices that could not be entered without accompanying pageantry.

It was on May 29th, 1919, that the Prince was presented with the freedom of the City—an honour to which he had a right by

patrimony.

The Chamberlain in his welcoming speech to the Prince as a freeman made a special point of his activities in connection with London institutions such as the Royal Academy and the British Museum, of which he had recently been elected a member of the standing committee.

His Royal Highness in reply naturally expressed his appreciation of the honour he had received and went on to speak of the War in words that are well worth quoting.

"The part I played was, I fear, a very insignificant one. But from one point of view I shall never forget my period of service overseas. In those four years I mixed with men. In those four years I found my manhood. When I think of the future, and of the heavy responsibilities that may fall to my lot, I feel that the experience gained will stand me in good stead. . . ." He closed with a vow to endeavour to live up to the

duties which were likely to devolve upon him, and to be worthy of the dignity of a freeman of the City.

In those few words lies the keynote of the past four years of the Prince's life.

"The part I played was, I fear, a very insignificant one." This, to a certain extent, is true, and voices the regret that still

very vital and useful to the nation. The remark, though not unnatural, may be dismissed as a very pleasant and normal modesty.

"In those four years I mixed with men. In those four years I found my manhood." In these two sentences lies the whole lesson of the War so far as the Prince is concerned.



[Swaine.

H.R.H. IN EARLY MANHOOD.

lingered that he was unable to take his place in the actual firing-line. But the part that any one of those four million men in the fighting line played must have been insignificant per se, while the mere fact that His Royal Highness acted as an ordinary officer was in itself significant to the nation and more so to himself, while, moreover, his official duties at home and abroad were It cannot be too often stressed how very different the upbringing of a Prince must be from that of an ordinary man. The earlier chapters of this biography have attempted to drive this point home, and their justification lies in these two phrases.

Before the War, in spite of Dartmouth, Oxford and the rest, His Royal Highness was a Prince and nothing more. Infancy he had had, and childhood, but often there was no chance for him to develop the normal feelings and the normal experiences of a man.

At the age of twenty that chance came to him clothed in the mask of tragedy for England. With extraordinary forethought, his preceptors and his father and, last but not least, the sentimental public allowed him to seize the opportunity for the first time in his life to mix with men, and therein to breed. It was to allow him a view of the nearness of death that gave a finer and cleaner perspective of the value of life.

And if those four years gave so much to his character as a man, they gave nearly as much to his abilities as a Prince. For four years he "mixed" almost constantly with men. Such practice could only have the result of making perfect, and after the War the difference was very noticeable in the ease and assurance with which His Royal High-



[Quick Pictures.

LIGHTING A TOC H. LAMP.

find his manhood. If there were any good brought about by the War, it was to enable the Prince to emerge from the hard chrysalis of Royalty into the butterfly of manhood; to allow him to think for himself instead of "of himself" for the first time: to allow him to get more than a distant spectator's sympathy for the normal man—a sympathy born of certain knowledge. It was to allow him to meet all nationalities and all classes on terms of equality that crises alone can

ness performed those democratic sideshows—to a monarchical pageant—of shaking hands with grace, saying a tactful word with sympathy and recognising faces with sublime memory, and smiling almost perpetually at enthusiastic crowds.

Thus it is, after the War had taught its lesson to the Prince, that there is one point upon which all classes and opinions coincide. The position of Prince of Wales may be exalted but little lower than the angels, and

everything its bearer does may be right; on the other hand it may be the remnant of an effete aristocratic tradition, the last trace of an obsolescent monarchical idea, a position which it is necessary for someone to hold, to gratify the loyal tastes of loyal men and women, but which necessarily makes the

X.

H.R.H. AS MAN OF BUSINESS.

PRINCE, Ambassador of Empire, Soldier, Sailor, Hunting Man, all these functions are so widely known, so fully treated by the journalists to whom



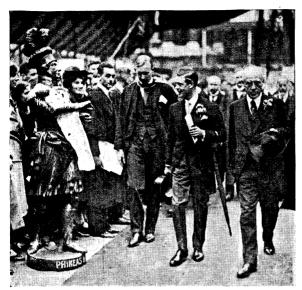
[Central News.

H.R.H. IS A RECOGNISED LEADER OF MEN'S FASHIONS.

bearer a trifle ridiculous. To whichever opinion one may incline, it is an undisputed fact that His Royal Highness plays his part as well as anyone could. He does his duty to his country and his father's subjects. Fate decreed that he should be born a Prince—therefore a Prince in the best sense of the word he has become.

the task of writing His Royal Highness's movements falls, that it is perhaps expedient to devote a short chapter to an aspect of the Prince that being held in but little esteem is but little noticed.

The business man is usually a house-holder, and we may therefore consider first the occasion upon which the Prince set



[Central News.

H.R.H. IS AMUSED BY "PHINEAS" AT A HOSPITAL FUNCTION.

up an establishment of his own. This was not until 1st July, 1919, when he was already 25. Previous heirs to the throne had been set up in life, either by marriage or for other reasons, long before this age. But the War, by reducing the number of eligible royal brides and keeping His Royal Highness at the Front, had postponed for him this state of regal manhood. In addition, the War had changed considerably the popular outlook upon royal marriages. There was a growing impression that love

should be associated with them. This feeling was most strong in England, and so though rumour alwavs suggesting was the names of future queens, the general broadminded opinion upon the subject was that H.R.H. be allowed should choose whom and when he wished.

In spite of rumour, this choice had not been made by the time he reached his twenty-fifth birthday, and it became clear that it was no use waiting longer to provide the Prince with an establishment and a court circular of his own. Even at the

age of 25 it was not without anxious consultation and some misgiving that the King allowed His Royal Highness to take this step, but these doubts were set at rest by the fact that H.R.H. had already shown himself a competent business man.

On 1st July, 1919, then, the Prince moved over to apartments of his own in York House, and was allowed to issue his own official account of his daily movements. The staff for the new establishment was selected with the greatest care, the members being chosen, as had been his equerry at Oxford, for their wisdom and restraining influence. Captain Lord Claud Nigel Hamilton, a comrade of His Royal Highness during the War, and the Hon. Piers Leigh, were chosen as equerries, and Sir Godfrey Thomas filled the onerous post of private

secretary. The Controller and Treasurer of the Household was Sir Sidney Greville, who was followed in this office by Rear-Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey.

Situated in St. James's Palace, York House looks out upon the quiet and dignified Ambassadors' Court, and has the merit of being remote from all sounds of traffic and bustle. The rooms themselves are few and form a typical bachelor's establishment, in the opinion of many exponents of the art of living the most comfortable type of room



Graphic Photo Union.

known. It is the sort of suite where one can put one's feet upon the mantelpiece The entrance is through a modest glass doorway into a square hall with a fine white



[Topical.

A SYMBOLIC EVENT.

H.R.H. greeting General Dawes over the ribbon stretched across the Peace Bridge connecting Canada and the United States.

without realising that they are number ten in size and covered inches deep in mud. panelled staircase leading out, decorated by tapestries. Round the hall are military

relics of the Prince's active service days, drums and bugles of the Grenadier Guards. The two sitting-rooms downstairs are devoted entirely to the secretarial staff. Here H.R.H.'s many letters are answered and his many callers received, while a door from one of them leads to the small but pleasant private dining-room, panelled with the rich dark wood that redeems dining-rooms from grossness. Upstairs are five rooms which

[Topical.

H.R.H. AND ADMIRAL JELLICOE LEADING A PROCESSION OF THE BRITISH LEGION AT A MEMORIAL SERVICE.

are the more private apartments, though the two larger ones are formal reception rooms. In the third sitting-room only is there any suggestion of the privacy which occasionally it is H.R.H.'s good fortune to obtain. This is a small room whose pervading tone is green. Apart from chairs and tables of Chippendale design, the most conspicuous feature is a large desk covered with papers and letters, which, however, are neatly arranged and bear constant witness to the

efficiency of the secretarial staff. Adjoining the sitting-room are the bedroom and dressing-room.

Let me give you a pen picture of a morning in the life of the Prince of Wales. If you call to-morrow morning at York House, St. James's, and ask the very polite footman who opens the door if you may see the Prince of Wales, you will be delicately asked if you "have an appointment," just as if

you were calling on any ordinary business man whose time is valuable.

If you admit—perhaps a little sheepishly—that you have no appointment, and that the Prince is not—er—exactly expecting you, you will not find yourself in any way rebuffed nor will the door be closed in your face. On the contrary, you will probably be invited to come inside.

The polite functionary will divest you of your outer wrappings, and you will be asked to step across the neat hall, past a table whose sole ornament is a ship's bell presented to the Prince by his shipmates in H.M.S. *Hindustan*.

You will be ushered into a large waiting-room—perhaps a little severely furnished—but having about it, like everything else at York House, some sign of its Royal tenant. Here you will be invited to take a seat. Reading matter will be found for you, and you will be left alone while the footman informs the staff of your presence.

A few minutes later, Sir Godfrey Thomas or Sir Lionel Halsey will enter the room and ask you your business.

Such is the routine H.R.H. insists upon. No caller must be turned away until seen by one of his personal staff.

Let us suppose, for the sake of showing the Prince of Wales as he is "at home," that you are fortunate enough to be accorded an audience. You will still have to await your summons in the waiting-room "across the hall," but promptly at the time fixed for your appointment you will be met by one of the Prince's staff—generally the equerry-in-waiting. You will be conducted up the stairs to the right of the waiting-room, along a thickly-carpeted corridor devoid of furniture, and asked to wait outside a closed door.

For a minute the equerry will vanish into the room. You will not have to wait long, however, for the door will be thrown open, and you will be asked to enter.

Things move easily and silently in the

Prince's household. No sooner have you entered the private study than the shadowing equerry will disappear, and you will be left alone in the presence of the most popular young man in the world.

Undoubtedly you will take stock of your surroundings, and I think you will be impressed by the quiet comfort of H.R.H.'s room. You will notice the lack of superfluous furniture—in fact, this might be the office of any head of a big firm.

It is a remarkable room, however, a room typical of its occupant. Notice the large oak flat-topped desk by the window, the swivel chair, so like that of any business office, the large book-case on the south wall, and the two deep leather armchairs that are drawn up so invitingly to the bright coal-fire that in winter burns so cheerfully in the grate.

The pictures, mostly hunting scenes, are also typical; and the human note is emphasised by the array of photographs on the mantelpiece. A large picture of the Queen, a smaller one of Princess Mary, her hair down her back, her dog "Happy" on her lap. Then that group of naval officers, with the Prince himself in the centre. On the other side of the room is a picture of the King in naval uniform.

You will notice also, I am certain, the ripe laid carelessly down with tobaccopouch, and on the desk an open box of

cigarettes beside an ash-tray containing many ends. And as you enter, if you are observant, you will notice how H.R.H. places his cigarette upright like a miniature lighthouse with its burning end towards the ceiling.

You will, no doubt, if this is your first audience, have rehearsed how you will meet His Royal Highness. You will have practised that deep bow, and have carefully schooled yourself into the correct use of the title.

But you'll forget all that before you've



[Keystone.

THE PRINCE AND HIS BROTHERS AT EPSOM.

been in the Prince's company five minutes. No need for the bow—a firm handshake dispenses with it—and no one who has ever shaken hands with the Prince can forget it. There is personality and pep in that grip—firm, reliant, a sort of "how are you, old man?"—with a ready smile to back it up.

You will be asked to occupy one of those comfortable armchairs by the fire—probably the box of cigarettes will be pushed towards you, and the courtesy of a lighted match from the Royal hand will not be forgotten,

Then the Prince will take up his familiar stand on the hearthrug—one arm on the mantelpiece—and you will be asked what you have to say. If it is only a formal audience, a fire of questions about your own profession, subject or trade will be levelled at von.

Time will fly as you talk to this companionable young man-you will forget the ticking silver clock on the mantelpiece under the spell of his presence. Maybe you will feel a little guilty at having stayed so long when tactfully H.R.H. extends a farewell hand to you, opens the door for you to leave, and hands you over to the equerry. who will see you safely to the front door.

There are many preliminaries before any Royal function, such as a Colonial tour or a foreign visit, can be undertaken by H.R.H. In such cases it is the Prince's practice to make himself conversant with the habits. history and conditions of the places he intends to visit, and before each tour there are interviews with different experts, articles read, atlases and encyclopædias consulted, for all the world like an English family deciding upon the rival merits of Bognor and Bournemouth for the annual holiday, only in much more detail.

But after all, these duties are inextricably mixed with the Prince's official position and can only in a minor way be considered as constituting a claim to the title of business There are, however, various tasks and interests of His Royal Highness that are purely voluntary and have but little connection with his office as a Prince. are the reforms and duties he has carried out as a landlord in Kennington and Cornwall and as a farmer in that county and in Canada.

Shortly after the War, the Prince, beginning to find that the official ceremonies and visits were proving a strain on his health, on the advice of his physicians and of his mother, Queen Mary, arranged to spend a few weeks on his Cornish estates. visit was, however, more in the nature of a change than a rest.

The Cornish tin mines, the fame of which was known to the Phænicians of antiquity, were one of his first considerations. industry has all through the ages had alternate periods of prosperity and depression. At the time of the Prince's visit, the machinery had become out of date, and the industry was rapidly waning, leaving in its wake a toll of unemployment. The Prince promptly installed, at considerable expense, more recent and economical machinery. which, besides providing more employment for his tenants, proved a good business pro-

position for himself.

Besides the tin industry, there were two other industries of importance to the Duchy —oyster fishing and farming. The former was one of the industries that looked up during the War, when the submarine blockade forced upon this country the necessity of being self-supporting, even in its ovsters. The Falmouth beds were therefore revived under the personal auspices of His Royal Highness, and temporarily, at least, added to the prosperity of the Estate.

It was, however, to farming that the Prince chiefly turned his attention. visited all the hamlets in order to see and be seen by the tenants themselves. He also visited many farms and had personal chats with the farmers and their families, inspecting the implements and stock, and giving instructions as to repairs. He gave his mind to schemes whereby the farms would be run upon economical lines, a task fraught with difficulties. The nature of the Cornish soil precludes the possibility of economising by the formation of large farms with up-todate machinery, driven by electricity, and reducing the picturesqueness of country life at the same time as its cost. The Prince therefore turned his attention to small holdings, parcelling out the land into plots which the more enterprising tenants might cultivate upon an intensive system, similar to that of France and Flanders. He also started a large farming business upon "co-partnership" lines which worked a much larger tract of land. This fact is interesting as indicating the up-to-date nature of H.R.H.'s business knowledge and enthusiasm, for though co-partnership has failed in many cases where a wave of depression has overcome an industry, there seem to be within it the seeds of a new system that might prevent the discord between capital and labour. Finally, mention must be made of his afforestation scheme. on the eastern side of Dartmoor are many thousand acres of bare land that is capable of supporting trees and could provide a source of future wealth for any landlord with capital and the foresight to seize the opportunity. His Royal Highness inaugurated a scheme whereby each year some 250 acres of moorland are planted with trees by the local unemployed, for whom work is thus found.

In contrast to this rural property, there

are the London estates of the Duchy from which a large portion of his income is derived. This property is not in the West End nor even in the Royal Borough of Kensington, but in one of the drabbest portions of South London, in Kennington, near the Oval Cricket Ground. The ground itself is actually on Duchy of Cornwall property: the Prince of Wales feathers on the caps of Surrey cricketers are thus derived. estate, though not by any means slum property, though certainly a populous, was hardly a popular residential quarter, and it was clear that improvements could be put in hand that would undoubtedly increase its amenities. Now the trouble with such schemes is that opinions differ as to whether the changes are really improvements, and usually the last people to be consulted are the inhabitants themselves. The Prince had the intelligence to break away from the traditional attitude of societies for elevating the condition of the poor and decided to visit the property in person to discover first what class of tenant he had and secondly what those tenants wanted done.

Accordingly he and Princess Mary visited

Kennington and took tea in the Old Tenants' Hotel, his sister acting as hostess. Conversation was business-like in not being confined to a discussion of the housing problem, but ranging round a variety of subjects, and the Prince found considerable interest and perhaps a certain amount of common experience in the recollections and reminiscences of one of the oldest clowns in England, who chanced to be a tenant on the estate.

Later, His Royal Highness made a more intimate tour of some of the houses, visiting his tenants by Delight among them surprise. knew no bounds when he arrived at the door of one of the little houses. In the kitchen all was hurry and bustle, for the Prince had asked for a cup of tea. Out came the best china and the least furry kettle on the stove was watched with anxiety for the crucial moment of boiling. In the front parlour with the tea safely made and His Royal Highness ensconced in the best and least comfortable chair, conversation soon overcame the shyness of unfamiliarity, and next day there was a very banquet of gossip.

The result of this and other visits was the destruction of old and dilapidated buildings and the raising in their stead of model dwellings. Other houses were reconstructed on modern and hygienic lines, until Kennington, though nothing can wholly relieve its drabness, has become one of the model estates of Southern London. Even Labour M.P.'s have admitted that though they do not in any way countenance the private ownership of land, His Royal Highness is one of the best landlords in the South of England.

To devote a chapter to this business aspect of the Prince may have seemed unnecessary, but there is at least one country in which this aspect of his activities does not pass unappreciated. In the United States of America, an English baronet on the stage is bold and an earl foolish, while a duke dodders. If they dared to present an English Prince, it seems clear that idiocy would be increased with rank. Thus to an American to learn that His Royal Highness has the ability to act as an efficient owner and director of a large estate comes as a surprise, and gives rise to a feeling of vast respect.



[Photopress.

H.R.H. IS A GREAT FAVOURITE WITH CHILDREN EVERYWHERE.

XI.

A PEDLAR IN PURPLE.

TAPOLEON in a burst of impotent indignation remarked that "England is a nation of shopkeepers." At the time the jibe was taken as a compliment, and stout-hearted Britons patted themselves on the back to think to what depths of vulgar abuse the British soldiery had provoked their traditional foe. With the passing of the Victorian age this description of Napoleon's became more truthful and thus more abusive. England was the market of the world, the shop of the hemisphere, but with success there came to the Englishman snobbishness and a desire, after trade was finished, to migrate to a villa in the suburbs and become a gentleman. All the leisure moments of the race are occupied in forgetting the shop front and the counter, and Royalty is, after all, a question of the leisure moments, a flash of scarlet and gold to refresh a romancelacking life.

Thus it requires courage to declare in cold print the important fact that H.R.H. is an asset to the nation's commerce, and is deliberately and consciously so used, both by himself and his advisers. His many Empire and foreign tours, which there is not space to record here, but which are fully described in my forthcoming book, are not merely a long round of hysterical greetings, but render national service in publishing to the world the great slogan: "British Goods are Best!"

His mere presence in one of the Dominions causes a wave of practical loyalty among British subjects overseas that carries in its backwash orders for hundreds of thousands of pounds-worth of English goods back home in England. While he is overseas the press of Europe sheds its limelight on the country visited. The Times publishes a special number dealing with that country's products and industries, and the whole press campaign tends to increase the demand for New Zealand mutton, Australian wool, Canadian apples or South African wine, according to the tour on which the Prince is at the moment engaged.

The visit reacts mutually upon trade at home and in the country visited, and His Royal Highness studiously fosters this activity by taking careful interest in all the factories, ranches, farms or orchards he is shown, and seizing every opportunity to use his influence in promoting trade

between the Dominions or other country visited and Great Britain.

There is room here for but two instances. The President of the Argentine Republic, Dr. de Alvear, appreciating to the full the value of H.R.H. as an ambassador of trade, issued an invitation to him to be the guest of the Argentine Republic during a tour of South America. It was a project which could do nothing but good to both the countries concerned.

At home it seemed to some of the less astute Englishmen that a considerable amount of money was being spent in despatching His Royal Highness to these various quarters of the globe, from which no obvious visible return was made. did not take long to answer such arguments by a conclusive array of figures that showed that the tours in themselves cost a sum that was microscopic compared with the consequent expansion of trade, and to point out that the tours were to a certain extent inspired by the Home Office, which had received numerous and influential commercial deputations asking that H.R.H. might be allowed to go.

In the Argentine there was no self-deception among the Senate as to the commercial value of the tour, and they willingly voted the sum of 400,000 pesetas for the Prince's entertainment, regarding it as an investment that would repay them a hundredfold.

It is therefore reasonable to look upon the tour in the light of a trade delegation, keeping for the moment in the background the welcome that was given him. welcome may be dismissed in few words as being as enthusiastic as anywhere else, but with a few distinctive touches due to the Spanish ancestry of his hosts. wherever he went he was met by flowers. Even as he drove down the streets of Buenos Aires bouquets of lilies and roses and showers of golden daffodils rained upon him; and when the yacht Allhasha, on which he and the President journeyed to the suburb of Avallanenda, passed near the bank, the same shower of blossoms would fall upon the decks. Other features were the bands of school-children who were grouped to meet him wherever he went, and, carefully coached, sang "God Bless the Prince of Wales" in English and presented him with bouquets and little speeches as he passed. Another method of greeting was the release of flights of doves from the buildings, which hovered gracefully over his head before dispersing over the town,

And now to business! In Uruguay, during the one day that he spent there, His Royal Highness visited an exhibition of livestock, which is the principal product of the Republic, and after a brief reception moved on to Buenos Aires. Here a palacio was placed at his disposal, and though his social engagements were many, he devoted a day to meeting all the British ex-Service men in the town, and a great deal of time to the tasks that here concern us most—visiting the industries of the country. He went over from top to bottom one of those vast factories that prepare chilled meat for transhipment to Europe. He saw the process from the driving of the herds into

and sheep, and took part in a round-up and stampede. An open-air lunch of freshly-killed mutton and ripe fruits had been provided by the gauchos, and the afternoon was devoted to a Rodeo, where the cowpunchers showed as great skill as their American counterparts. Here again, next day, the press of Europe advertised the industry and took each of their readers through the same performance as the Prince.

In Chile, where the courtesy of his welcome by President Allesandri and his colleagues was similar, H.R.H. inspected the orchards and fruit gardens and vineyards of the country, and while heavy snowstorms which had blocked the passes of the Andes kept



[Illustrations Bureau.

H.R.H. GREETING CHIEFTAINS IN NAIROBI DURING HIS AFRICAN TOUR.

the yards, through the painless scientific slaughtering, the quick mechanical skinning and dressing of the skins, to the finished meat ready for embarkation. And everything he saw was in the next few days published in the press of England, with the consequent advertisement of the Argentine meat trade.

Afterwards traversing the country in a sumptuous special train, with the route lined as usual by country folk watching for him to pass, he saw the early stages of the cattle business by means of a trip to the famous Liebig stud farm in the Mental district. Here he was more in his accustomed element, and, mounted on a horse, rode round the vast herds of 40,000 cattle

him in Chile, he improvised his own programme of sightseeing with especial reference to his duties as ambassador of trade, until finally an amelioration of the weather enabled him to return to Buenos Aires and so complete his tour.

It is well to pause at this juncture to consider the results achieved by this tour from the commercial side. The advantage to Uruguay, the Argentine, and Chile is obvious to all who read the papers at home during the trip. Those Republics had an advertisement not only in England but in Europe and America, such as they had never had before, and the trade journals gave particular prominence to their products. Fully to appreciate what England gained,

it is necessary to have been in the Argentine during the tour, to have seen the Argentine papers, and to realise the large place that Britain and British products took in the thoughts of the inhabitants. Even while H.R.H. was still there, orders began to pour in for British goods, and this country and her goods had a publicity the effects of which have not even now died down.

Similar in business intent, yet more deeply backed by forces of sentiment, is the E.P. Ranch that His Royal Highness bought in Western Canada, by the shores of the Pekisko creek, in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. Though his idea of becoming a ranch-owner originated when he was visiting the famous Bar-U Ranch, and was struck by the spaciousness of life and landscape out there, yet the purchase was no expensive hobby, but a business proposition on business lines, with the double object of helping the Canadian farmer by the provision of thoroughbred brood mares and aiding the English raiser of livestock. This is achieved largely by precept and example, and the ranch itself is a prosperous commercial concern.

Beddingfield Farm of 1,600 acres, and an additional 2,400 acres leased from the Government, form the E.P. Ranch, 26 miles from the nearest railway station, along the 60-foot-wide unmetalled prairie roads that are awaiting development, and in winter are veritable quagmires. The house itself, though large and airy, is built of logs, and is no more ostentatious than

many another Western homestead. The building in which the ranch workers live is a model of comfort and efficiency, with a separate bedroom for each man, hot and cold water, shower baths, dining-room, sitting-room and verandah. The ranch and every barn is wired for electricity (generated on the spot), and the whole arrangements are a model of science and efficiency.

For this much of the credit is due to Professor William Carlyle, who has the science of farming at his finger-tips and is a lecturer on agriculture at many American universities. The ranch hands are of several races, with a Japanese in the person of the cookgardener-mechanic-butter-maker-bugler of the establishment.

For the Prince a visit to the ranch is a holiday, devoted to unconventional amusements in unconventional attire. Shooting, fishing and golf take up part of his time, together with the entertainment of his neighbours, but his chief delight is to partake in the business of the ranch. Riding and rounding up the stock for inspection, or shovelling gravel, pitching hay or stacking oats—it is all a very pleasant change from the official duties of his rank.

It is, however, far more important for us in this section to realise the business side of the ranch. There are pedigree shorthorns, pedigree sheep, Clydesdales, Percherons, racing stock and Dartmoor ponies, which the Prince brought over specially for the children of the neighbourhood to ride to school, so that their riding might not be ruined by



[Topical.



[Central News.

H.R.H. AMONG THE COWBOYS ON A CANADIAN RANCH.

being perched astride their cart-horses. breed has thrived so well among the foothills that it is anticipated that in a few generations they will be bred to the size of polo ponies.

In October, 1924, the first general auction of stock was held in H.R.H.'s presence, and the prices realised amply justified the ranch as a commercial speculation. Though there has not since been another public auction, all the time private buyers come from all over Canada and the United States to purchase their needs from Professor Carlyle.

The importance of this example of H.R.H.'s business capabilities in the North American continent is difficult to overesti-In Canada, of course, it is a perpetual bond of union between the Dominion and the Mother Country—a bond of union that reinforces the slogan "Buy British and Be British." In the United States the effect is more subtle but no less great. We have it on the word of an eminent American journalist that many Americans used to imagine that "the King of England does nothing except appoint Scotsmen to make jam for him, and Piccadilly hatters to keep him in lids," and perhaps nothing has done more to correct this impression than the commercial success of the E.P. Ranch.

There are many ways of appealing to an American woman—His Royal Highness has

them all. There is only one sure way of appealing to a typical American manthat is by dollars. He would have been prepared to welcome H.R.H. as he would have welcomed any other Royalty, as a picturesque anachronism efficient enough for backward European countries. Now he is prepared to respect him, as he respects the Queen of Rumania, as a business chief capable of turning his abilities into rustling dollar bills. And, strange as it may seem. this realisation of commercial ability in the Prince of Wales increases the American citizen's faith in the commercial ability of the whole of England. It makes him feel that, in the luxuries of life at least, British goods are best. It may sound ridiculous, but it happens to be true.

A Pedlar in Purple," this section is headed, and it is not the least of H.R.H.'s claims to respect that he can act not only as an ambassador of Empire but also as an ambassador of trade. Hard-headed business men, on commercial delegations in England. have urged as warmly as the most hysterical women in the countries visited that His Royal Highness should be allowed to continue his tours; and pounds, pesetas, dollars have poured into England following the reports of the enthusiasm that has greeted

his famous and disarming smile.

Our next issue will contain an intimate personal study of His Royal Highness as Heir to the Throne.

THE QUICK ROAD TO HEAVEN

By DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

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THE actions of the man ascending the shale slope were curious. Every few minutes he paused and stared intently at the empty mountains above, then down into the remote Chitral valley. His acutely watchful air savoured of some timid wild thing dreading ambush. Yet he was too near Chitral itself to be in danger of a Pathan sniper, and the likelihood of self-created fears was utterly denied by his hard jaw, the resolute line of the mouth, the small, dark eyes glittering keenly above high cheek-bones.

"I've got to be careful," he kept telling himself, as his wiry frame leaned forward to ease the strain of climbing. "These heights seem empty, but you can never be sure. A single inquisitive hillman might ruin things." He nodded, again stopping to scan the giant landscape, typical of the

vast Himalayas.

Below, the sudden magic of spring had brought colour to the valley. The drab walls of Chitral were relieved by the new foliage of the *chenar* trees. Masses of red rhubarb, dried for fodder and left over from the winter stock, were stacked in festal gaiety among the branches. The few patches of crops, precious in an everhungry land, glimmered like emeralds, with their flanking borders of planes and willows decked by strings of green beads.

But above the valley snow ruled, thawed smudges of it on the lower slopes, then a soft carpet, then frozen sheets, cataracts, fantastic wreaths, ice-curtains of infinite tracery. Great space and desolation dominated the silent mountains that stretched their peaks to the sky, merging into the Pamirs, the roof of the world. The stillness and the melancholy were almost tangible, though the Chitral river had a voice far beneath, audible to an intent listener as a changing moan, a nameless lamenting.

The cruel aloofness of the scene suited the mood of the man climbing the shale. actually brought a smile to his thin lips. He canted his rifle under one arm and resumed the ascent, heading for a point where the hanging gallery, the path made of stakes driven into the rock, began its winding course around precipices and cliffs towards the bleak Drasuj Pass. Sight of its twisting curves, like the coils of a giant snake, seemed to fill him with excitement. He increased his pace, left the shale behind, reached the sterile slopes that gave scant existence to markhor and ibex, crossed to the small hollow where the hanging gallery commenced.

Four feet wide, literally suspended above space, it was a tribute to the Chitrali labourers who had built this passage over the mountains with crude tools and clever hands. Branches had been laced between the stakes projecting from the rock, and over all lay a covering of stamped earth. Curling and ever rising along the face of the heights, it sought the protection of every concave stretch. The masses of rock that overhung it might look threatening, poising to crash down and sweep away this flimsy path into infinity. But actually, they were a safeguard from roaring avalanches, always menacing in the spring, for any rush of snow and stones that came tearing down would be canted into space by the jutting rock and fall clear of the path-locally known as the Quick Road to Heaven, as much on account of its danger as of its ascent to the skies.

"Ingenious bit of work, this puri," the climber told himself, advancing carefully. Here and there were some treacherous patches of thin ice. "I wonder how many extra miles it covers in trying to hug overhead protection?" He glanced upwards, knowing that coil upon coil must run

parallel above, but the projecting lip cut off all view, until he reached one of the infrequent spots where Nature had been unable to help the path-makers. For fifty yards or so, the *puri* ran the gauntlet of a steep but open rock-face on its left. With sickening emptiness on the right, there would be no hope for a man caught by an avalanche on this exposed section.

The shadows in the valley were noticeably longer when the climber at last came to a halt. His jerky breathing was not merely due to exertion. The small eyes glinted like those of some hunting animal, and the thin mouth moved in a hungry way. Lighting a cigarette, he stood still and listened.

Nothing broke the hush. The high silence was living, sentient, an austere and soundless hymn to the cold purity that ruled. For the moment its spell gripped the climber, and he felt the crushing, measureless emptiness of it all. Then he stared down at the remote valley, a pencilled line, and gave a grating laugh.

"Peter Dale, my friend, it will be very sudden. One moment you will be walking along quietly, probably thinking of Alison." His face contorted with a spasm of fury. The jealousy that burned beneath had the fire of madness. "And the next——" He drew a deep breath. "Heaven help you!"

From his pocket he produced a small saw. Lying flat along the hanging path, he craned his head and shoulders over the edge. The drop below was not quite vertical, but anything falling would tumble down with terrific speed until it reached the slight curve overhanging the coil of the puri a hundred yards below. That curve would simply give an outward impetus to its descent.

Hands a trifle unsteady, the climber wormed his way still farther over the edge, twisted himself until he could see the underneath of the puri. The supporting stakes were about six inches in diameter and six inches apart. Toes digging into the earth, left hand gripping the edge, he stretched his right arm to its utmost and began to saw a stake close to where it projected from the rock. It was a difficult task, hanging head downwards above space, and striving to cut through the tough wood at that angle, but he worked away steadily, while the strain brought beads of moisture to his temples.

Presently the stake was almost severed. A mere finger of wood held it from snapping. He eased out the saw, sent its teeth biting

into the next stake. As the work proceeded the strain became more and more racking, his own risk more and more vital, for each succeeding stake drew him closer to the undermined section of the puri. But by superhuman stretching he kept his weight clear, and at length, when six stakes had been sawn down to a thin core, he wriggled himself back on to the path, and got to his feet.

"Phew!" Though every sinew ached and his chest heaved under the fight for breath, he grinned triumphantly. The trap was laid. Anybody using this hanging path could never detect the undermined span until it collapsed beneath the feet.

"All I ask for now is a little luck." He stared up at the brooding white crests. "If any hillman had been coming down from the Drasuj Pass to-day he would have crossed this bit hours ago. The most reckless fool wouldn't negotiate the puri in the dark. So in that quarter things are safe. But suppose some Chitrali comes up from the valley in the morning, before Dale sets out?" He bit his lip, scowling doubtfully. "No use supposing. That's where I must pray for the slice of luck."

Turning, he began to descend the path, while his mind conjured up hot, vivid pictures, all centering around Peter Dale. For once the glinting eyes were still, and any friend encountering him would have been astonished by the fact, since the chief feature of Gordon Vernbridge, explorer, hunter of big game, was his restless gaze. Many a newspaper had referred to it in various terms—"the roving orbs of the shikhari," "the lynx-eyed watchfulness," "the all-seeing alertness of the true pioneer." But the glowing obsession that gripped him left no room for outward watchfulness.

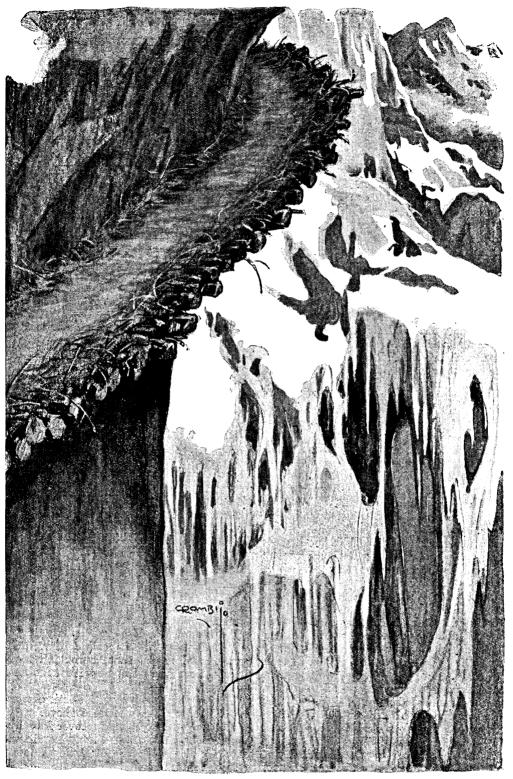
The first picture that glided up was his meeting with Dale on the boat. They had been put next to each other at table, and he had rather liked the looks of the man—tall, fair, loose-limbed, suggestive of mental and physical fitness. Each discovering that the other was landing at Bombay, they drifted on to the object of their trip. Vernbridge explained that he intended to do some stalking in the Himalayas.

Dale smiled. "You've chosen the right spot. A day in the mountains after markhor is a real thrill. Apart from any shooting, the scenery's magnificent, and some parts of the range savour of another world."

"You know the Himalayas?" asked Vernbridge, with quickened interest.



" 'Phew!' Though every sinew ached and his chest heaved under the fight for breath, he grinned triumphantly. The trap was laid."



"Anybody using this hanging path could never detect the undermined span until it collapsed beneath the feet."

"Fairly well. That's why I had the good fortune to fix up a contract with the Literary Alliance, Limited. You've probably heard of their standard classic, *The Himalayas*?"

"I've read it three or four times. Got

a copy of the book in my cabin."

"They're bringing out a new, revised edition, and I have the job of editing it. I'm going to collect my impressions first-hand, instead of relying on memory."

"By Jove!" said Vernbridge eagerly, "you're the one man in a million I've wanted to meet! You can put me on to

the best sport?"

"Certainly, though I'm rather too keen on the wild folk to care for shooting them

myself."

"Sentimental fool," thought Vernbridge, but he checked his sneer. Dale was going to be useful, so genial friendliness must be

the order of the day.

By the time they landed the two were on intimate terms. Dale was going straight up to Chitral, and Vernbridge had arranged to accompany him. The prospect of first-class sport under the guidance of a man who knew the ranges as well as any wandering Pathan outweighed any other consideration.

"I can't stand his sloppy outlook on hunting," Vernbridge told himself. "And sometimes I could throttle him for his everlasting attempts at being funny." His own sense of humour was very deficient. "But it's worth tolerating him, to get valuable advice on the habits and haunts of these mountain animals." The hard, lusting glint of the killer flared up in his

eyes.

But when they reached Chitral, a dwarfed dolls' village among the gigantic ranges that seemed to hold up the sky, something happened to Vernbridge that made him almost forget his beloved shooting. met Alison Grant, daughter of the Colonel commanding the 32nd Gurkhas-the infantry battalion of the mixed garrison there. Perhaps scarcity of white women in these isolated wilds lent to her charm, though an oval face with the deepest violet eyes, a wide, sympathetic mouth, and a figure supple as a willow needed no aid to beauty. the first time in his self-centred life, Vernbridge fell in love. And because it was the first time, his feelings swamped all The intense, domineering ability of the man was turned into this new channel of emotion.

For a little while he worshipped blindly,

seeing her at every opportunity—and there was nothing to hinder him in this tiny place where white society constituted a mere handful. He rode with her in the valleys, climbed with her on the lower slopes, sat close to her on the balcony in the evenings, when the moon sailed up above the vast barriers around and tinged the remote snows with the mystic radiance of a dream. Had he been less blind with craving he must have realised that here was the deference and interest of a young girl for a justly celebrated hunter, and no more. But his illusion remained intact until he proposed, only a fortnight after his arrival at Chitral.

Alison's refusal was a bitter shock, but his confident nature soon reasserted itself. He had been too impetuous, he decided. Let him go cautiously for a time and she

would change her mind.

"It'll help things if I don't see her for a day or two," he thought. "I'll drag the tender-hearted Dale out to-morrow, and we'll go after ibex." Here he laughed drily. His affair with Alison had nearly swamped

the object of his trip.

Dale, busy on his book, agreed to accompany him after a deal of persuasion, and they set off the next day for the upper slopes. At the end of four very arduous hours Vernbridge got in a shot at an ibex. His usual deadly aim was upset by the glare of the snow. The animal began to limp away with a broken leg. There was something pathetic in its shivering efforts to escape, and the sight moved Dale. He thrust up the barrel as Vernbridge took a second shot.

"Sorry, but I can't bear to see the thing killed like this."

"What d'you mean?" demanded the furious Vernbridge. "D'you think I came out to stroke the brutes? Let go, I tell you!" He tugged at the rifle viciously and pulled it away. Dale shrugged his shoulders, then started scrambling up the slope towards the limping ibex.

"Can't help it," he called back. "If you'd killed it first time, I wouldn't have minded so much. But now it's lame and

suffering, well——'

His long limbs moved with elastic ease as he climbed towards the ridge above.

Before Vernbridge could recover from his amazed chagrin, Dale had ascended almost into the line of fire. Not daring to risk a second shot, the baulked hunter scrambled up after Dale, cold rage glinting in his eyes.

The ibex, weak from the loss of blood, tried to drag itself up a rock-face. The broken leg was its undoing. Three times it made the attempt, then turned at bay to face Dale. Gallantly, yet with mute agony in its brown eyes, it waited for the expected attack. The abrupt ending of the ridge behind had trapped it.

Dale held out his hand, made a curious, crooning sound. The long horns, marked by transverse bars, were lowered as if to charge. The great mountain goat stiffened. But Dale never moved back an inch. Very, very slowly he was exerting that influence possessed by the few—the power of reassur-

ing animals.

The next half-hour was so surprising to Vernbridge that he held his rage on the leash. He saw the gradual subjugation of the ibex until it actually permitted Dale to run his fingers down from the quivering flank to the wounded leg. He saw it stand, terrified yet motionless, while Dale bandaged the broken bone with his handkerchief, wrapped around a couple of splints made from the branches of a stunted scrub.

"Not such a miracle as it looks," whispered Dale as he worked. "I happen to have the knack with wild things. The ibex is just about the most wary thing in the mountains. If this one hadn't been trapped, it would have streaked off in a flash, despite the leg. But being baulked, it gave me my chance. The wild goat tribe aren't savage—only timid. Overcome their timidity, and the rest's simple."

When he had finished, his fingers crept

back and stroked the lean flanks.

"You're wonderfully graceful, old boy and a marvel on your feet, I'll bet, in normal times. I'll christen you Corinth, in honour of those Soccer players with the twinkling toes who are almost as swift and elusive as yourself."

He gave a final, gentle pat, and rejoined the watching Vernbridge. "Hope it pulls through," he said. "I must come up here again soon and try to see how it's getting on."

Vernbridge said nothing. He had witnessed something outside his wide hunting experience, and it kept his mind occupied for some time until his anger at being baulked again simmered uppermost. The outlook of the killer reasserted itself. He had been cheated of his quarry, and his contempt for Dale changed to something approaching hatred.

"Mistaken kindness," he said at last, his

voice harsh. "It won't live. In that state, it's at the mercy of any prowling animal."

"There aren't many prowlers up here," answered Dale gently. "Too sterile. These higher slopes seldom hold anything but markhor or ibex." He laid a hand on Vernbridge's shoulder and continued apologetically. "Please forgive me for spoiling your first shoot. I know you're a bit hipped. But to me, the wild folk aren't far short of human. A wounded animal strikes me as more pitiful than a wounded man, because it can't understand, and can't reason. Don't you see what I mean? Just a matter of outlook, of course."

Vernbridge looked at him, then turned his head away. "Oh, all right," he said

between his teeth.

"Sickening, sentimental fool!" was his thought. "I'd like to chuck him down a

precipice!"

His hatred might have been stronger, but he had the conquest of Alison to occupy him. For the next few weeks he scarcely troubled his head about Dale. The ibex, he learned, was still haunting those particular slopes, and Dale had gone up on several occasions, tackling the animal with such success that it would approach at the sound of his voice. Deep down in that animal brain some form of gratitude and trust must have been awakened.

But Vernbridge dismissed Dale and his affairs with a contemptuous sneer. Alison was his lodestar, to be followed exclusively. Her first refusal had only whetted the keen edge of his love.

At length, when she still kept him at a friendly distance, he suddenly gathered the staggering truth. Peter Dale was in love with her, too, and his love was returned.

To Vernbridge, accustomed to getting his own way, coldly assured of gaining anything he wanted, the truth seemed incredible. Realisation drove him to a stage bordering on madness. That night, alone in his bungalow, he walked up and down raving. In this greatest hunt of all he had failed.

"I want her! I want her!" he muttered. In his own warped way, he was passionately in love. "And but for Dale!——" Seething fury choked his throat, made a whirling chaos of thought itself.

When the first spasm had passed, there remained one ruthless obsession—the resolve to bring vengeance on Dale. Unreasoning hatred conjured up dozens of schemes. In a place like Chitral accidents could happen easily. . . . A falling rock among the

mountains. . . . A slip on some perilous ledge. . . . A bullet from a Pathan outlaw. . . .

The dark eyes showed icy fires as he pondered. He might have been some wounded cobra. Lacking the true sporting spirit, he had ever been a bad loser. The few animals that had escaped his rifle never aroused any admiration in him by their gallant efforts. Towards each he had felt a venomous intent, as is the way of the born killer.

With Dale disposed of, he told himself, winning Alison would be merely a matter of time. But he must go cautiously. Whatever plan he formed to get rid of Dale must be complete, infallible.

"I've got to pretend I like him. I've got to smile and be friendly. Once let suspicion start up, and the most perfect scheme might fail."

So with a granite thoroughness, typical

of the man, he decided to weigh up the pros and cons of every plan, and in the meanwhile not a soul should dream that he was anything but very fond of Dale

Soon the Fates played into his hands. One morning Dale informed him that early the next day he intended to survey Drasuj Pass. Several pages of his book were being devoted to the Chitrali hanging galleries. It was somewhat early in the year to attempt the ascent, but he wanted to test the puri under its worst conditions, not under its best.

"It's rather important," he said, "to be accurate in a standard publication of this sort. People accept it as an official



its



nodded, and through his veins leapt an exultant thrill. Dale alone on the hanging gallery! It could be undermined late in the afternoon. hundred to one no native would use it after darkness. Even in daylight few attempted the crossing at this early season. Only let Dale be the first on that frail path to-morrow, and-

"Of course," said Vernbridge again, and looked away, lest his burning eyes should be noticed.

HIS vivid retrospect had not run its course until Vernbridge reached the Chitral valley, a pool of purple velvet picked out by the lights of the cantonment. The snow-crests still glimmered eerily against a sable sky, and he gazed up at them once more as if invoking their support. In his mind was a sharp picture of the puri, of six stakes cut through to the core, a death-

trap waiting for victim. He clenched his hands, drew a long breath, and turned towards the valley road. He must

be very wary to-night. He would need all his control to hide his tense feelings from Dale and the others. men would have indulged in an extra drink or two, to steady themselves, but Vernbridge, who never touched alcohol because it might impair the deadliness of his aim, kept down his inward excitement by sheer will-power. When he strolled into the Grants' bungalow, after dinner, he was his usual restrained self.

Colonel Grant, Alison, and Dale were sitting on the verandah, chatting.

"Hullo, Vernbridge," said the Colonel nially. "And what have you bagged genially. to-day?"

"Nothing, I'm afraid." Vernbridge took a chair. "I'm getting lazy. This place seems to have cast a spell over me." He glanced covertly at Alison. The moon had come up, and under its elfin rays she seemed more desirable than ever. Her slim face, carved of warm ivory, the fathomless violet eyes hinting at a touch of the mystic, the youthful sheen of her throat, these stirred him to the depths.

"Well, it's cast the opposite kind of spell over Peter," she said, with a little laugh. "He's disgustingly energetic. To-morrow he's getting up when all sensible people are still asleep, just to survey the puri for the sake of readers who won't ever go within a thousand miles of it."

"Stout fellow. I'd toddle along with him if he'd wait till a reasonable hour." Vernbridge leaned forward. It had come to him that to-morrow's waiting would be unbearable. He must prepare some good excuse for an early arrival at the scene of the tragedy. "Look here, Peter, I can't turn out at dawn. Too much of a wrench. But I'll come up later and join you somewhere near the Pass, if you like."

"Good man," said Dale, stretching his long limbs. "I should hate having only myself to talk to all day. I'm a rotten talker, but a worse listener. Of course, I may get a glimpse of Corinth. He makes a splendid audience. I burble a lot of rubbish to him, and he can't argue back. He simply stares at me with those inquiring eyes of his, and wags his beard."

"Most remarkable!" The Colonel nodded. "Most remarkable! A number of my subs almost had the cheek to laugh in my face when I told them about this ibex business. It certainly does sound a bit tall, you know, You haven't been pulling our legs?"

Dale grinned. "Seeing is believing. Would you care to turn out with me in the morning, sir, and if Corinth is about, you could make sure for yourself. wouldn't? Then I must scoff my chotahazri in solitary state. Really, there's nothing wonderful in the thing. With his broken leg, Corinth couldn't get away. And after I'd patched it up, I suppose he felt grateful. Besides," he went on flippantly, "he saw I had a harmless face. In the days when I played Soccer, people used to charge me like blazes because they thought I looked too mild to retaliate. Corinth would make a wonderful footballer. He'd be able to butt a goal from the half-way line."

"A childish game," said Alison, with the contempt of the true Rugger enthusiast. "I thought it had died out years ago."

"Among the people who weren't good enough to play it. They've gone over to Rugger."

"How you dare!---"

"Peace, my children," said the Colonel. "They're both crude scuffles compared with polo. I want to hear some more about the ibex. The nearest I've ever got to one was half a mile, and then the ungrateful beast didn't wait for me to take aim. Peter, proceed."

An hour of gossip and amiable wrangling passed by. The Colonel wandered off to make up a four at bridge. Presently Vernbridge arose, his face a cheerful mask. He wished them good night and strolled away into the darkness. Alison watched him disappear with a curious look of uneasiness in her violet eyes.

"What's the matter?" asked Dale, "What's the slipping his hand over hers.
"It's a beastly

thing to say, but somehow I feel he hates

"Oh, nonsense, my dear! Vernbridge is a topping chap, although I wish he hadn't such a lust for shooting things. But after all, it is a big-game hunter's job. Whatever

put the idea into your head?"

"I've never liked him," said Alison slowly. "He's clever, and interesting, and in some ways I admire him. But sometimes there's a horrid expression about his mouth, and then he looks capable of being merciless. When he found out I preferred you to him, I'm certain he began to hate you violently, though he's been hiding it well. He means to do you harm." She gave a little shiver. "I've no proof. Only intuition. But a woman's forebodings are often true. You'll be very careful to-morrow, won't you?" She gazed at him anxiously.

"My dear child, d'you imagine he intends to push me over the edge of the puri?" Dale laughed. "Poor old Vernbridge!" He hasn't done anything to be condemned like this. Shall I take a parachute with me, so that if he gives me a shove, I can sail down into the valley with my fingers to my nose? All right," he continued, dropping his banter, "I'll be careful, though honestly, I shouldn't dream of mistrusting

him."

"Will there be any native guides with

"No; they aren't necessary." Then, seeing her worried expression, he drew her into his arms. "It isn't fair to make these hints about him, is it? I'll swear he's a decent sort, though naturally he must be pretty fed up at having no chance with the nicest darling in the world. All this alarm is pure imagination. You don't like him, and so—it's the old saw about 'give a dog a bad name.' We mustn't allow you to have creepy, crawly thoughts. The best cure is this." He held her closely, and the meeting of their lips seemed a thoroughly effective cure.

Dale thought no more of Alison's warning. Her dislike for Vernbridge, he decided, was one of those unreasoning whims that occasionally seize upon the most adorable of the fair sex. When he set off soon after dawn the next day his sole thought was for the glory of the mountains under the loom of early morning. Where the sun's rays struck upon the snow, glimmered great sheets of iridescent ruby. Tier upon tier rose ridges and crests, some straight, some fantastically fretted. There were gullies and ravines where the sun had not yet reached, and these lay as black forms of mystery. Between two crests hung a fanshaped glacier, and fiery dawn had turned it into a lake of shining blood. Even the shale, ugliest of all hill features, had taken on a charm of its own.

Tramping briskly through the chill silence, he soon reached the first ascending track. The dominant vastness of the region was not of this world, and for awhile it kept him hushed. But gradually the growing light made the scenery a little less coldly forbidding, and he began to whistle. A long way above, the *puri* wriggled and twisted itself along its precarious climb.

The scramble up the shale stopped his whistling. He needed all his breath for negotiating the steep slope and its shifting surface. Down below, the Chitral river murmured and moaned, roared angrily, lamented, gurgled with the laughter of a flute, rumbled and boomed on its way through sunless gorges, narrow chasms, and occasional stretches of open, crop-bejewelled land.

He was two hours reaching the beginning of the *puri*, and here he paused for a few minutes, lighting a pipe and studying the distant valley in admiration. The pure air brought detail surprisingly close.

"Wonder whether friend Corinth is up and about?" he thought, and started along the puri at a leisurely pace. "By Jove! The more I see of the Himalayas, the more petty and futile everything else seems."

Glancing over the side of the hanging gallery, he could not repress a shudder of fascination. The glassy walls, falling away into space, gave a sensation of nausea. Some of these drops were a fair representation of what people termed infinity. In a manner, an ibex might be timid, but it must also have nerves of steel to tackle these carved heights.

Pulling out a small book, he began to make notes of the puri, stopping here and there to describe some particularly salient point. Though he had been on the path before, his admiration for Chitrali cleverness was no less flattering. Their method of snuggling under every concave surface to avoid avalanches, he described minutely, and at each place where the back slope of the rockface made protection impossible he gave

rough measurements and distance. Another hour passed quickly.

"It really is extraordinary what these fellows can do with primitive implements," he said aloud, trudging along a level stretch of the puri. "With axes, spades, and their bare hands they've made something that would beat a lot of our own engineers at home. Wonder what they could accomplish with modern gear? Probably they'd make a hash of things, and—""

Zee-eep! With a sudden, tearing crack the path gave way. Dale flung up his arms, grabbed wildly at space, strove to plunge his curving fingers into the smooth wall. Then sickening emptiness opened up, and he went down.

That hurtling flight through space seemed a year of agony. Actually, he had only fallen twenty feet, snow and rubble shooting beneath him, when his right hand brushed up against the root of a stringy shrub. Convulsively his fingers closed. Came the searing jerk as the arm took the weight. The next second he was dangling and swaying above the void.

A deadly sickness in the pit of his stomach, suffocation in his throat, he hung there for awhile expecting the shrub to snap. His eyes were shut, and he dared not open them. The raw expectancy of the next fall was too much for human courage.

But the shrub held firm and at last he steeled himself to draw breath and gaze down. Three hundred feet below, the almost vertical wall curved out into a tiny lip, overhanging the next coil of the puribeneath. To the right the puri itself emerged into an open stretch, only partially protected. The next fall would mean a whirling drop into infinity. . . .

He moistened his lips, gazed upwards. Twenty feet of smooth wall rose up to the hanging gallery, now broken by a clean gap edged by the splintered stumps of stakes. That wall could never be climbed. He must hang here, growing colder and colder, his hand more numbed and paralysed until the fingers failed and he went down in a second, final rush.

By a great effort he conquered his seething giddiness, forced himself to think. Vernbridge was coming up to-day.

"He might have started early. He might have set off an hour or two after I left."

An hour or two. An hour or two. It was madness to hope that he could hang here for any time. The icy air was already



at work on his veins. Walking, the limbs resisted its clutch. But suspended, motionless, how could a man fight the creeping cold?

Here the dogged instinct for life reasserted itself. Some hillman might be on the *puri* to-day. A shout carried far in this chill hush.

Dale's lips parted. He shouted with all the strength of his lungs, shouted again and again. The distorted echoes came back as though they were answering cries, and for several minutes eager hope kept him tingling until he realised the mocking truth.

The fingers of his right hand felt like lead. He could not hang on here much longer. Better to make a hopeless effort at climbing upwards and fail in the attempt than wait hanging without a struggle until his numbed fingers gave way.

He must keep his eyes turned from the emptiness below. He must force redoubled strength into his strained muscles.

He thought of Alison, and the vision of her gave him a new, quiet determination.

"I will escape," he muttered with a kind of grim defiance, and scanned the smooth rock-face for the tiniest sign of another hand-hold. Higher than the shrub and a little to the left was a crevice. Let him get his fingers wedged in there as the first move.

Bracing himself, he stiffened his right arm, pulled. Slowly, inch by inch, he drew himself upward. Every second he expected the roots of the shrub to snap. His free hand groped, found the small crack in the rock, gripped desperately. The effort left him gasping. But the numbed coldness had lessened. Hanging there, he made the slopes ring with another bout of shouting.

Staring from this new angle, he could see a very small rock projecting above the crevice. Even by reaching sideways he could not get far enough to grab it. He would have to swing to make the extra distance. There was no other way.

Beads of moisture trickled down his forehead. To send himself swaying like a pendulum, while only his fingers crooked in the crevice held him from dashing down into space, seemed the crowning madness of a nightmare. But he set his teeth, glared at the knob of rock, and began to sway to and fro. At the fourth swing he clutched out fiercely, lost his hold in the crevice, felt his fingers touch the knob of rock, slide away. In the fractional second of falling his hand closed like a talon, held firm. He had gained five feet of that stark twenty.

It was some time before he could gather sufficient breath to shout. Mingling with the echoes, he could have sworn, came a different sound. Yet he dared not trust his ears.

"Probably a rush of stones or snow somewhere," he muttered, and strove to ease his limbs by hanging limply. The sockets of his arms felt red-hot, on the point of tearing clean away.

The drop below drew his unwilling eyes. Vaguely he noticed how the snow clung to the rock-face. When it was loosened, it would probably collect in a tumbling mass and sweep down until it hit the curve above the coil of the puri beneath. No wonder Chitralis were so careful to seek out every overhung nook for their hanging galleries. To be caught on an open stretch by the smallest avalanche would mean destruction. The thoughts ran through his head without volition. A dozen wayward, unsought notions came and went before he could press back the drugged flow in his brain and concentrate on the next move.

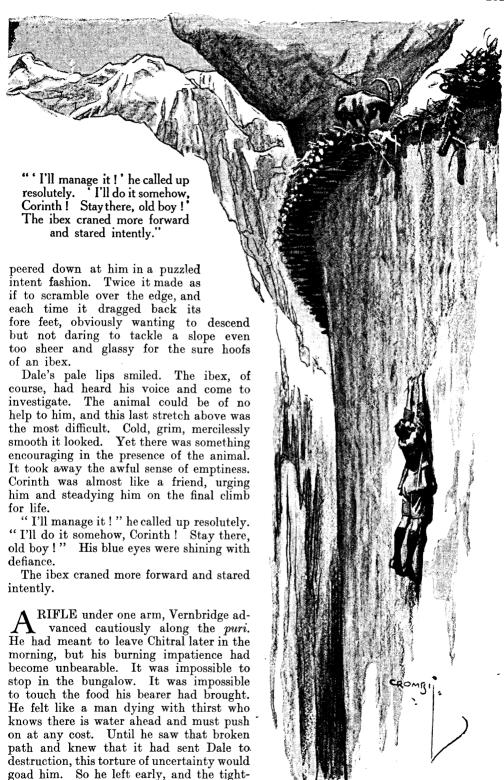
Fumbling at possible holds, straining at angles that promised to fling him into eternity, he reached a spot within ten feet of the broken *puri*. He thought he heard a pattering noise above his frequent shouts, but still he dared not hope.

Then, unmistakable, rose a shrill sound, half whistle, half grunt. He looked up and saw Corinth, the ibex, perched on the edge of the broken *puri*, directly above him.

Sight of the animal acted on him like a stimulant.

"Corinth!" he called. "Corinth, you wonderful old fellow!"

The mountain goat gave a low gurgle and



ness about his cheek-bones, the twitching

of his mouth, were signs of what raged within.

The shale ascent and the lower slopes he covered at a frantic speed. Reaching the puri, he managed to check himself a trifle. Never, in the tightest corners of big game hunting, had his heart pounded like this, his pulses raced and fluttered.

"He's dead by now," he kept telling himself; "he's dead, smashed to pieces. But there would be no abating of the inward flutter until he saw the evidence with his

Although he knew that the undermined section of the puri could not be seen from below, he continually stared upwards. Presently he heard a faint sound. He stiffened, listened.

It was Dale's voice, shouting.

Vernbridge wanted to curse with a murderous fury, but he could force out no words. The threads of reason seemed to snap. He dashed up the path at a reckless pace, his features dark and working. The wild run helped to clear his mind, fashioned a thought to which his whole being responded. Dale was shouting for help. That meant he was in danger.

"There's still a chance. Perhaps he fell and managed to grab at something. Perhaps he's hanging on now." Vernbridge's lips drew back and showed his teeth. His grip on the rifle tightened. Precautions didn't matter. He had intended to get rid of Dale in a way that could leave no ghost of a clue pointing to murder. Nobody would have suspected him of under-

mining the path. But now—
"Curse him!" he snarled. "A bullet will end his shouting. If they ever find his body, let them guess."

A turn of the hanging gallery brought him out to the unprotected section where the rock-face sloped back. From here he could see the coil of the puri above. wedged his foot in a crack, pulled himself Three hundred feet above be saw Dale clinging like a fly to the rocky wall, and directly over him the ibex perched on the snapped edge of the path.

Vernbridge laughed. It was a low sound, but it held the venom and menace of a cobra's hiss. Here was a chance presented by the Fates. They had done him a bad turn in preserving Dale when the puri collapsed. Somehow he must have grabbed at a protection and saved himself. Now he was hanging by tooth and nail, the ibex directly above him. If the ibex fell-

"Dale, you fool!" Vernbridge was whispering, gloating over each word. "I'm going to kill you. You can't hear me, but you'll hear this soon." He patted his rifle, raised it over the edge of a boulder. "What's more, you're going to die in the way I intended. If they ever found you with a bullet wound, well—there might be awkward inquiries. So I'm just going to shoot that ibex. It will crash down straight on top of you, Dale. Yes, straight on top of you. You'll fall, and spin, and hurtle, down, down. . . . It's an old saving—two birds with one stone."

Nostrils dilated, small eyes ablaze, he took deliberate aim at the ibex.

"If anybody hears the shot—if anybody finds you—there'll only be one conclusion. And that won't involve me." His finger crooked, pressed the trigger.

For a fraction of a second the ibex remained motionless, and Vernbridge thought he had missed. Then it lurched forward, hung half over the puri, its fore legs pawing the air. He saw Dale shrinking against the precipice in a futile attempt to escape the imminent fall.

The sagging animal stirred. Suddenly. in a last, convulsive spasm, it heaved itself away from the edge, gave a great, backward bound along the puri, crumpled up, and came crashing over the side, several yards clear of Dale.

In a frenzy of rage at this unforeseen turn, Vernbridge covered the clinging figure with his rifle. Before his finger could crook rose a harsh, grinding note. A broken mass of snow, dislodged by the falling ibex, was tearing down at him with lightning speed. The hurtling body of the ibex had caused an avalanche.

Vernbridge saw that great cascade, and he forgot Dale, forgot everything save his own glaring danger. He leapt down from his niche, made a desperate burst to regain the protected section of the puri, twenty yards off. He had not covered ten when a screaming roar was in his ears, and the mass struck him square. His upflung arms were no shield. Engulfed, swept on like a straw, he went down into space with the snow wave. . . .

ALE and the search party caught sight of each other at the same time. After a nightmare of clinging and climbing he had got back to the puri and started urging his aching limbs to the descent. He had been moving for an hour, most of it spent in negotiating the half-broken section of path where the avalanche caught Vernbridge, when he heard shouts below. A minute later Alison had her arms around him, and Colonel Grant, two of his officers, and four native guides were crowding as close as the narrow path would admit.
"Oh, my dear!" Alison could say no

While she clung to him, the Colonel

explained.

'An avalanche reached the valley. We found Vernbridge." He lowered his voice. "Death must have been mercifully swift. A gurkha picked up his twisted rifle near by. We formed this search party at once, though nobody but Alison dared hope to find you alive. Was Vernbridge with you when it happened?"

Dale told his story. When he reached the incident of the sudden shot from below

the eyes of his listeners widened.

"A shot!" burst out the Colonel. shot at the ibex, perched directly above you! Good God! As Vernbridge was the only man on the puri, as far as we know—"

Alison nodded gravely. "Don't you see? He must have undermined the puri himself. Peter says the broken stakes didn't look at all worn or decayed. He must have come up here this morning to look at the result of his treachery. He found Peter hanging on to the precipice, with the ibex above, and realised that if he shot it Peter would be swept away by its falling body."

"Yes," said Dale, "I'm afraid that's the truth. The shot came from the unprotected section below. But instead of falling on top of me, Corinth leapt back in his last throes, tipped over the edge, clear of me, and started up the avalanche that caught Vernbridge beneath. Poor old Corinth," he added huskily. "He saved my life and avenged himself, though he never understood.

The Colonel cleared his throat. "Bless my soul! Bless my soul! What on earth could have been the motive for-"

Alison made a little, silencing gesture. "He was jealous, terribly jealous of Peter. I had a feeling he would try to do something like this, though Peter laughed at me when I warned him." She looked up into Dale's eyes, and the radiance of relief made her own shine like stars.

Cupping her face between his hands, he stooped to kiss her.

The Colonel coughed. "About turn!" was his command to the native guides. "Gentlemen," he said to the two officers, "it seems tactically correct to turn our backs for a moment!"

THE QUEST.

A CROSS the golden floor he strayed, Unkempt and tired, but undismayed, And in and out and up and down He searched, and sniffed each saintly gown Whilst scandalised archangels shooed, And seraphs ceased their song and booed. "I want my friend-my master dear!" "Hence, mangy cur—he is not here; He was a sinner-"

"That may be, But he was always good to me. You need not fear I'd wish to stay In Heaven without my Man. Good day." He left in haste the Blest Abode, And, joyous, took the Lower Road.

JOE WALKER.

ON PIXIE HILL

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

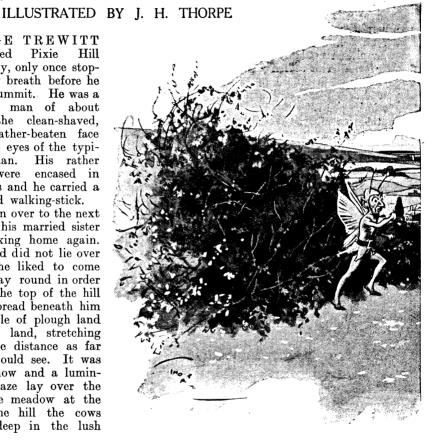
Author of "Sugar and Spice," etc.

EORGE TREWITT climbed Pixie Hill briskly, only once stopping to draw breath before he reached the summit. He was a small sturdy man of about fifty with the clean-shaved, brick-red, weather-beaten face and keen blue eyes of the typical countryman. His rather short legs were encased in leather gaiters and he carried a rough, gnarled walking-stick.

He had been over to the next village to see his married sister and was walking home again. His direct road did not lie over the hill, but he liked to come this longer way round in order to stand at the top of the hill and see outspread beneath him mile upon mile of plough land and meadow land, stretching away into the distance as far as the eye could see. It was midsummer now and a luminous golden haze lay over the In the meadow at the bottom of the hill the cows stood knee deep in the lush grass.

George Trewitt always sat on the top of the hill for a few minutes, leaning against the single tree that grew there, and smoking his pipe before he went down the gentler slope on the other side that led to the village where he lived.

He had lowered himself to the ground with a sigh of content and taken out his tobacco pouch before he realised that he was not alone there. Another man about his own age and size was sitting at the other side of the tree. His face was weather-beaten and ruddy as George's, but it was framed in stubbly white side-whiskers. He too wore leather gaiters over broadcloth trousers and an old-fashioned farmer's hat. He was a



neighbour and friend of George's and greeted him heartily.

"Well, Garge, come out for to enjoy the sunshine same as me?"

"Aye, William. I be on my way home from Martha's. This be a better way round of a fine day, bain't it? A climb, but well worth it."

The two old men lit their pipes and smoked in silence till suddenly William gave a chuckle.

"What is it?" said George, taking his pipe from his mouth.

"I've just thought of something," said

"What?" persisted George, replacing his pipe in his mouth.



"The two men stared at the sight helplessly, paralysed by amazement."

"Why, us two—you an' me, Garge, on Pixie Hill on Midsummer's Eve. It ought to be a lad wi' a lass, eh? Not two old'uns like you and me."

George smiled, quietly enjoying the joke. "They'll be coming out later, I doubt,"

he said. "'Tis early yet."

"But 'tis Midsummer's Eve all the same," said William, chuckling, "and 'tis you an' me on Pixie Hill. Us'll have to be keerful not to fall asleep, Garge. They can take you easy if you fall asleep."

"Oh, us'll not be likely to fall asleep,"

said George.

But the late afternoon was warm and the

air was alive with the somnolent hum of insects. George took his pipe from his mouth and laid it on the grass beside him. William, did the same. Their heads dropped sideways. Neither spoke.

Suddenly George woke up with a start. His start roused William, who also sat up rubbing his eyes. They looked at each other

and smiled sheepishly.

"Well, us dropped off arter all," said William, stretching. "It were the heat and the resting after the climb. Us'd best be getting on, perhaps. You be going back home, bain't you, Garge? Shall us go together?"

But George wasn't listening. He was gazing in front of him, his face grown pale beneath its tan, his eyes staring.

William followed the direction of his gaze. His face, too, grew pale and his eyes bulged. In a low thorn-bush close to the ground a tiny man dressed in green was struggling. A thorn had caught his tunic and held it. The little man was sobbing and stamping with rage as he struggled to free himself.

The two men stared at the sight helplessly,

paralysed by amazement.

Then the little man saw them and began to shout to them for help. They heard his tiny voice, faint, thin and flute-like.

"Help me, can't you? Help me, I say!" They could still do nothing but stare at him, open-mouthed with astonishment.

The little man grew angry. He shook his fist at them. His tiny voice quivered with

rage.
"You great louts! HELP me! Can't you? HELP me! Can't you? I say."

There was something ludicrous about his fury and threatening gestures in face of their great bulk, and the realisation of the ludicrousness of it suddenly released George from his paralysis. He bent forward, put out a large roughened hand and very gently freed the elf from the detaining thorn. elf slipped daintily out of the bush, then, turning round, began to voice his fury again, shaking his fist and stamping at the thorn.

"You hateful creature," he cried shrilly. "The queen shall know of this. She'll put a blight on you. How dare you touch one of her servants!" Then he turned to the two men and came straight up to their feet. A cold chill of fear crept over George as he approached. He swept a courtly bow. George touched his hat in return in a clumsy

rustic salute.

"Thank you," said the little man with great dignity and graciousness. "I thank you most sincerely. The queen shall know of your kindness. Meantime, I give you each a fairy wish."

Then he spread wings, gauzy and iridescent as a dragonfly's, and floated up into the summer air. In a second he was a mere dot. In another second there was no trace of him at all.

The two old men turned and stared at

"He's-gone," stammered George.

"He—he were there, weren't he?" stammered William.

"'Course," said George, "din't you see him and hear him?"

As if by common consent they arose from the ground and began slowly to descend by the path that led to the village. Both were still pale and walked unsteadily, as if dazed. Neither spoke till they were half-way down the hill. Then William said:

"Gosh!" and after another silence. "Did you ever see such a tiny lil' thing? He were

one of Them, of course."
"Of course," said George.

"Plenty of spirit, hadn't he?" William.

"They have," said George.

Then William said slowly, thoughtfully: "What d'you think he meant by a fairy wish?"

"Jest a fairy wish," said George simply. "Jest exactly what he said. A fairy wish. You wish for a thing an' it comes true."

"Do you b'lieve it, Garge?" said William

incredulously.

"'Course I do."

"Well, try it. Wish for somethin' now and see if it comes."

"A likely thing to do," said George scornfully, "wasting it afore I've thought of the best thing to wish for. I tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to sit down to-night for a good hour's think like before I risk wasting it."

"I reckon I'll ask for money," said William thoughtfully; "money be always useful."

"It be sometimes and it bain't sometimes," said George; "it don't do to do nothin' in a hurry."

They had reached the village now and were approaching the little cottage where George had lived alone ever since his sister married.

A tall figure in clerical costume was approaching from the opposite direction. It was the Reverend Theophilus Medlowe, sole incumbent of the little country village. He had reached George's gate, and, seeing George approach, stood waiting for him. It was quite evident that he proposed paying George a parochial call. George slackened his pace and a guilty look came over his rubicund countenance—such a look as one sees on a schoolboy's face when detected in a misdemeanour. For George had not been to church for four Sundays, and the Reverend Theophilus Medlowe prided himself upon keeping his flock up to the mark. When any of them failed to appear in church for four Sundays running he always called to demand the reason of their absence. George was generally a fairly regular attendant at church,

because, unlike the rest of the congregation, he enjoyed hearing himself sing, but for the last four Sundays he had yielded to the temptation of spending the morning working in his little garden, and he knew that the Reverend Theophilus Medlowe had come to reproach and exhort him. Now George was by nature a meek little man and never openly contradicted or argued with his pastor, but whenever the Reverend Theophilus Medlowe's reproaches and exhortations became especially exasperating he would allow himself the satisfaction of muttering sotto voce comments and defiances that he lacked the courage to utter openly. The Reverend Theophilus Medlowe was conveniently deaf.

"Ah, there you are, George," said the Vicar, "there you are! There you are!" The Vicar generally said everything once or twice so as to give himself time to think of what to say next. "There you are! Just coming home? Good! I was coming in the hopes of a little chat with you. Little chat with you."

"Come in, sir," said George, without enthusiasm; and then fixing pleading eyes on William, "Come on in, William."

He wanted William there too. would help to bear the brunt of the attack. so to speak. After all, William hadn't been for two Sundays. . . . He had for the time being forgotten the pixie and his fairy wish.

The three of them entered the cottage.

"Now, George," began the Vicar, "you haven't been ill, have you, haven't been ill, haven't been ill?"

"No, sir," said George, trying to look innocent and mystified, "not as I knows of."

"Though he do suffer wonnerful from rheumatism," put in William with a vague idea of helping things.

"I haven't seen you at church lately," went on the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe, ignoring William, "not at church, not at church, not at church, George. How's that, George, how's that?'

"'Cause I ain't been, sir," said George, still keeping up his bold pretence of innocence. The Reverend Theophilus Medlowe frowned.

"Come, come, George," he said, "this won't do. Won't do at all. Won't do. It's your duty to come to church. Duty. Four weeks absent. Never do at all. want you to promise me to come next Sunday, George. You must promise me to come to church next Sunday. You're neglecting your spiritual faculties. Neglecting your spiritual faculties. Why, even the animals

use such spiritual faculties as they have. As they have. The very birds utter songs of praise. Songs of praise." He looked out of the window for inspiration, saw a cat passing and continued vaguely, "The very cats-

"Wish you was one," muttered George

under his breath.

Then he found himself gazing not at the Vicar but at thin air. The Vicar had vanished. He turned to William, William had turned to him. They were alone in the They gazed in a horror-stricken silence around them, into the corners of the room, out of the window at the empty street, and up at the ceiling. Finally they looked down at the floor on the spot where the Vicar had been standing.

And there sat a large black cat bearing an elusive but undeniable resemblance to the

Rev. Theophilus Medlowe.

George stared at it in helpless horror while the sweat stood out on his brow. He put up a hand to loosen his collar and continued to stare as though he thought that if he stared long and hard enough the creature would disappear. But though he stared both hard and long the creature did not disappear. It remained there, looking up at George with an expression of intense surprise. At last George found his voice-a thin awe-stricken voice that seemed to belong to someone else.

"Gosh!" he said, "me fairy wish!"

"Yes," said William in a voice as thin and awe-stricken as George's, "An' you'd only got one. You can't turn him back. That's the worse of fairy wishes. You're apt to use 'em up that way without meaning to. I'm going straight home to have mine now, Garge, before I spoil it like without meanin' to, same as what you've done."

"But-what about me, William? Surely you be goin' to help me!" pleaded George

piteously.

William shook his head. "It ain't no use, Garge. No one can help you. I'm afeared of usin' up my wish unbeknowst same as what you did if I stay talkin' much longer. I'll try 'n help you as far as I can later."

He went out of the cottage, closing the door behind him. George stood gazing at

the closed door.

"Thinkin' of bisself," he said bitterly. "I didn't know William'd be such a damn mean skunk as that."

He remembered suddenly that he was in the presence of the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe and coughed apologetically. Then, feeling suddenly rather unsteady about the knees, he went over to his chair by the fireplace and sat down. The Rev. Theophilus Medlowe followed him pompously, arching his back and waving his tail, and sat down opposite, gazing up at him with a sort of dignified expectancy as if asking what he was going to do about it.

"I do be sorry, sir," said George hoarsely.
"It were a mistake. If so be as I'd got another I'd turn you back straight away.

Surelye, I would, sir."

The Rev. Theophilus Medlowe twitched his tail impatiently as if waving aside such inadequate excuses. Then the grandfather clock in the corner of the room struck seven and George remembered that the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe dined at seven. Probably he had been taking a stroll before dinner when he called at the cottage. The thought aroused George's hospitable instincts. Rev. Theophilus Medlowe must be fed. that raised a somewhat delicate problem. What should he offer the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe? He knew that the Rev. Theophilus was not a teetotaller. It seemed an insult to offer milk to a man who, though no wine-bibber, was known to be a good judge of wine and to have a glass every evening with his dinner. George had a bottle of cider in the cupboard. Very doubtfully he took it out and held it in his hand, gazing thoughtfully from it to the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe, who was watching him intently from the hearthrug. He couldn't, of course, offer it in a glass and well, it did seem a bit queer to offer anyone a saucerful of cider. The difficulty was that he didn't quite know how far the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe was cat and how much he had remained the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe. Coming to a sudden decision, he poured out a saucerful of milk and a saucerful of cider and placed them side by side on By the saucer of cider he placed the floor. two or three biscuits. Then he turned and once more gazed at the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe, who was still watching him from the hearthrug. Again he was confronted with the difficulty of knowing exactly how much of the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe was cat. So he said very respectfully, "It's ready, sir," and added coaxingly, puss, puss."

The large black cat rose and with a dignified jerky gait strongly reminiscent of the Vicar's mode of procedure, walked across to the saucers. He sniffed the cider and, turning from it disdainfully, began to lap up the milk with every sign of satisfaction. The

sight afforded the watching George great relief. When the reverend gentleman had finished his milk George refilled the saucer. At once a faint—a very faint—grating sound emanated from the metamorphosed cleric. The Rev. Theophilus Medlowe was purring. George still felt dazed and stupefied. It was all very well giving him a saucer of milk, but what was he going to do about it? suddenly the solution occurred to him. must make William use his wish to turn the Theophilus Medlowe back again. Whyever hadn't he thought of it before? William was so determined not to do anything hastily that probably he wouldn't have used his wish yet. If he hurried he'd catch him before he used it. There was no time to be lost. He took his hat from behind the door, put it on his head, then turned to look hesitatingly at his new pet. He must of course make sure that the Vicar was all right before he went. The Vicar seemed quite all right. He had finished the milk and gone back to the hearthrug. He was sitting there in front of the fire washing his face. He looked very comfortable and placid. He was evidently growing more accustomed to his state and had decided to make the best of it. George opened the door and again stood hesitatingly on the threshold. Then he cleared his throat and said respectfully, "I won't be long away, sir." And then added more familiarly, "I'll be back soon, Puss."

Then he hastened as quickly as he could down the road to William's cottage.

He found William sitting at the kitchen table gazing open-mouthed and open-eyed

at a shabby brown leather bag.

"William," panted George, "I've come to beg a favour of you. Take me as an example of what happens to them as uses fairy wishes for themselves and—the Lard knows what I be goin' to do about that cat. William, you've not used your wish yet——'

"But I have, Garge," interrupted William breathlessly. "I have. I used it just now. Just the minute afore you came in."

"What did you wish for, William?"

"I wished for a hundred thousand pounds, Garge."

For a minute George struggled for breath. Then he said:

"An' did you get it?"

William took out a red spotted handkerchief and mopped his damp brow.

"I don't rightly know, Garge," he whispered; "as soon as I wished the wish this

here bag came on the table. Sudden-like. Out of nowhere."

"What's in it?" said George hoarsely.

Fearfully George stretched out a hand to the bag and undid the catch. It fell open, showing a tight mass of wads of bank-



"Coming to a sudden decision, he poured out a saucerful of milk."

"I haven't opened it, Garge. You comed in soon as it appeared. Garge," he cowered back as if terrified, "open it. I daresn't. I tell you, I daresn't."

notes, fastened round with elastic bands. All William's fear vanished. He leapt upon them exultantly.

"It's the money. It's the money,

Garge. It's me hundred thousand pounds."

"There's letters on the bag, William," said George slowly, tracing with his fingers a half-obliterated B.H. upon the brown leather. "Be it fairy marks?"

"What matters it what it be?" said William. "It's money, Garge. It's

hundred thousand pounds."

George sighed.

"Well," he said, "some has all the luck. I were coming round to ask you to use your wish to turn the Vicar back for me. I've never been placed so awkward in all my life before, William."

With a great effort William brought his mind back from his hundred thousand

pounds to George's problem.

"I don't know but what you bain't better off with him as he is now, Garge. He'd be so tremendous angry if he was turned back. He'd have the law on you sure as eggs is eggs. I'm not sure "-thoughtfully-" but what it don't amount to manslaughter. Turnin' folks into cats."

George had turned pale.

"You know it were a mistake, William,

"Who'll believe it were a mistake?"

"I don't believe it's agin the law anyway." "Well, if it ain't that, it's agin the Bible.

Witchcraft an such-like's mentioned in the Bible."

"What about you, William?"

"I've jus' got a bit of money for myself without inconveniencin' no one," said William virtuously. "I haven't gone about turnin' people into hanimals."
"An' I always looked on you as a friend,

William——" said George bitterly.

"No, don't let's quarrel, Garge," said William. "Us can't afford to quarrel. Us'll need each other's help. I'll help you all I can. About your cat. I say you be safer with it as a cat, Garge. A tur'ble time be comin' to you if ever it gets back. take care of it, Garge. Don't let no dogs get near it. I've heered tell that if they're killed they turn back."

"What!" gasped George.

"Aye," said William calmly, "if so be as a dog killed your cat to-morrow, it wouldn't turn into a dead cat, it'd turn into the Vicar's corpse."

Gosh!" breathed George.

"An' they'd hang you for murder."

"An' if it dies natural?" said George breathlessly. "It must die natural sometime, however keerful I be of it, William

"Then it turns into the Vicar's corpse too. Whensoever it dies. An' you'll have a lot to explain, then, Garge."

George mopped his brow again, and

reached out unsteadily for his hat.

"I'd best be goin' back to see it's all right, then, William," he said.

"Aye, you'd best," agreed William. "I'll just be countin' this through, then I'll

bury it for safety in the garden."

George almost ran back to his cottage, so anxious was he for the safety of his visitor. He opened the door and looked quickly round the little kitchen. It was all right.

His visitor was curled up in the middle of the cushion in George's chair, fast asleep.

George came in and shut the door with a sigh of relief. His relief was, however, soon drowned in discomfort. The chair on which his guest was reclining was the only comfortable one in the room, and was the one on which it was George's custom to sit in the evenings. The other three were hard and very uncomfortable kitchen chairs. George made a tentative effort to lift the slumbering clergyman gently from his chair on to the floor without rousing him, but the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe twitched angrily in his sleep and shot out a paw, as if annoyed by the liberty taken, and George replaced him and returned hastily to his hard kitchen chair.

He went to bed very early but he could not sleep.

He came downstairs in the night several times to make sure that his guest was quite comfortable. Once he made up the fire lest he should be cold, and another time he put a saucer of milk on the hearthrug in case he should wake up hungry. George had been brought up to show respect to the Cloth.

THE next day the village was alive with the news of the Vicar's disappearance. Excited groups gathered in the road discussing it animatedly. It seemed that he had set off from the Vicarage for a short walk just before dinner and had not returned. They had telegraphed to his only surviving relative—an elderly aunt—and were making inquiries along the railway line as well as searching the countryside. The generally accepted theory was that he had lost his memory.

The unhappy George spent the day indoors sitting upon the uncomfortable kitchen chair and anxiously watching his guest. His guest seemed to have settled down remarkably well. He seemed, in fact, perfectly happy and comfortable. It was as if he had at last solved the whole problem of The solution consisted in lying curled up on a cushion in front of a large fire, dozing and sleeping and stretching, and feeding on sardines and cream. For George had opened a tin of sardines for the Vicar's breakfast, and the Vicar had eaten them with obvious relish. Moreover, having once tasted cream, the Vicar now refused to look at milk and George had to sally forth continually for fresh supplies of cream. reverend gentleman had a very healthy appetite. Once the Vicar, on returning from his saucer, had found that George had ventured to occupy his chair, whereupon he uttered an imperious mew in a tone so reminiscent of the Rev. Theophilus Medlowe's voice when annoyed that George leapt precipitately out of the chair and did not presume to occupy it again. George could not help suspecting that the Vicar was beginning to enjoy his metamorphosed state. As a man he had never known such luxurious comfort. No duties, no responsibilities, no demands upon his time or mental faculties, the most comfortable suit of clothes he'd ever had in his life, nothing but sleep and warmth and comfort and strange delicious food. George couldn't help sighing enviously when he compared their lots. had not dared to leave his cottage that day except for hurried visits to the nearest farm for the Vicar's cream. He was afraid lest his guilt should show plainly upon his countenance and betray him to the groups who still stood along the road discussing the Vicar's mysterious disappearance. would have liked to run across and see William, but he daren't even do that. He thought wistfully of William-William peacefully counting over his new-found wealth with no metamorphosed pillar of the Church on his hands.

But towards evening William came in to see him. William carried an evening paper in his hand and did not look as happy or care-free as George had expected him to look. He thrust out the paper to George with a "Read that!"

George put on his spectacles and read slowly and deliberately:

"Mysterious Disappearance of Country Vicar."

"No, no," said William impatiently. "Not that! The next column."

George turned to the next column, and read as slowly and as deliberately (George was not a fluent reader):

"Cashier Robs Bank and Absconds——What's absconds mean, William?"

"Runs off," said William, still impa-

tiently. "Go on."

"Found Dead in Wrecked Car," went on George, syllable by syllable. "No Trace of Booty. Police Searching Neighbourhood."

"There!" said William, taking the paper from him. "An' if you go on reading you'll see that he'd got the money in an old brown bag with B.H. on and that his car was broke up on the road just near by here with runnin' into one of those there telegraph poles, but they din't find no money. They say as how someone must have come along an' found him dead an' took his money. That's the money they give me, Garge," ended William, his hardly retained calm dissolving into panic. "That's they bag they give me an' all. That's the bag I buried in my back garden last night. What'm I goin' to do? 'Tis a tur'ble thing to happen to a upright man like me."

"Have you spent any of the money?"

said George.

"Aye. One note. I took it down to Bilcaster yesterday afternoon. 'Tis the last I'll be able to spend, Garge, an I'll be lucky if they don't put me in prison for it. Me! Me what's acted sidesman while Ben Lard were ill."

"Well," said George slowly and not without a certain secret unregenerate relish, "us are both in a bad way now, William, as you might say, me an' my cat an' you and

your money."

"You be all right," said William impatiently. "So long as you keep him a cat no suspicion can come to you. They be dragging the pond for him now. But me—me to be put in prison at my time of life, an' respected too as I am an' no one to protect me." He glanced surlily at George. "An' not even the Vicar to speak for my character what with you turnin' him into a cat."

But William had been wrong when he said that no suspicion could attach itself to George. A well-intentioned neighbour called that very evening to inform him with a certain amount of satisfaction that people were "talking." And they were talking about George. Mrs. Miggs and Mrs. Truefit and Mr. Tranler and many other village worthies all swore to seeing the Vicar pass along the road from the Vicarage to the village at about seven o'clock on the night of his disappearance. Mrs. Blobs, who kept the general shop, had seen him enter George's

cottage, and though she waited till after nine, had not seen him emerge. In fact, no one had seen the Vicar after his visit to George. The groups began to assemble in the vicinity of George's cottage, watching it suspiciously and making audible remarks about "them as kills defenceless old men for their money." Mrs. Banks, who was deaf and nearly blind, said that she thought she'd seen George dragging a dead body down to the river that night, but couldn't be quite sure.

Poor George watched anxiously from behind his Nottingham lace curtains and pots of geraniums, while the Vicar, surrendered now wholly to the pursuit of well-being, slept luxuriously upon his red cushion. Soon George had another visitor. The Vicar's aunt, accompanied by a policeman with a notebook, came to see George, and the policeman rapped out a lot of questions. George's answers could not be called really satisfactory.

Yes, the Vicar had been to see him that evening. What time had he left? Soon after seven. He hadn't stayed long. Which way did he go? Back to the Vicarage. No one had seen him return that way, though people had been at their doors till after nine? Well, he'd gone the other way then. But no one had seen him go that way? Well, perhaps he'd gone out at the back. George had forgotten. He hadn't a good memory. The aunt took no part in this discussion. She was staring at a large black cat that was sitting on a red cushion on a chair by the fire. Every movement of it, every aspect of it seemed familiar. it turned its face towards her it seemed strange that it was not wearing eyeglasses with a black cord . . . She must pull herself together. It would be terrible if she let this unfortunate affair get so on to her mind that she saw likenesses to her poor nephew in every animal she met. The cat began to mew as soon as the door closed and almost automatically George went to open another tin of sardines for it.

During the next three days events moved fast, and at the end of the three days William came across to George's cottage despondently.

"It's all up wi' me, Garge," he said. "They've traced the note to me, an' that spyin' old cat of a Miss Tibbie next door she's told 'em she saw me buryin' somethin' in the garden that night an' they're got what they call a warry out to search the place an' they'll dig it up an'——"

"Well, it's as bad for me," said George

unsympathetically. "Yours is only stealin', an' they're tryin' to make me out a murderer. They're diggin' about my place now, messin' up all my taters an'——"

Just then both of them heard a tapping at the window and turned sharply. The little green man was standing outside the window, stamping impatiently and making imperious gestures to them to open it. George hastened across the room to open the window and the little green man flew on to the table, where he stood frowning at them sternly.

"Well, you have made a mess of it," he said with intense scorn in his tiny voice.
William swallowed, then said indignantly,

"Well, why did you give me stole money?"

"Stole money?" said the little man.

"It was your sort of money, wasn't it?

What more did you want? And it isn't as if any of you ever kept it. It just goes from one to another, round and round. From the man on the road to you and from you to someone else. What does it matter where it comes from if it's only got to go on to someone else? I don't understand. You have such stupid ideas. It was so convenient finding the bag there with just the amount you asked for. And as for you," to George, "wasting your wish turning people into cats."

"It were a mistake," said George humbly. The Vicar was sitting up on his cushion watching the little green man with interest. He put out a paw playfully as if to investigate, then decided it was too much trouble, curled up again and went to sleep.

"Well, I've managed to get one more wish for you," went on the little man peevishly; "it's been a lot of trouble. The Queen didn't like having to give another. I couldn't possibly get more than one. You'll just have to do the best you can."

And he spread his iridescent wings and flew out of the window up into the summer

"Let me have it, William," pleaded George. "I need it worst. Mine's murder, an yours is only stealin'."

"Well, I like that," said William indignantly. "They can't prove nothin' agin you while they can agin me. They can find ""

He stopped and stood staring out of the window. Two policemen were coming slowly up the little walk to the cottage door.

"Quick," said William. "They're coming for us—let's toss who'll have it."

" No!" said George with a sudden shout. "I know! I know! I wish . . . I wish it

were back at Midsummer Eve with you and me on Pixie Hill."

EORGE sat up with a start and looked about him. His start roused William, who also sat up, rubbing his eyes. They looked at each other and smiled sheepishly. "Well, us dropped off after all," said William, stretching. "Us'd best be gettin'

on."

George rose silently and the two old men began to walk down the hill together. George threw a furtive glance at his friend and said, "William——"

"Aye?" said William.

But suddenly George knew that he would never mention their recent adventures to William and that William would never mention them to him.

"'Tis a grand evening," said George; "'tis goin' to be a grand day to-morrow."

And William said, "Aye, Garge. 'Tis, surelye."

Then they walked down to the village in silence.

At the gate of George's cottage they met the Vicar. The Vicar went with George into the little cottage, and William, with a rather curious glance at the Vicar and at George, went on home.

"You weren't at church last Sunday, George, were you?" said the Vicar, as soon as they entered the little cottage. "Weren't

at church . . . weren't at church."

Then he decided not to say anything more about it. George was staring at him with a set tense look on his face that the cleric mistook for an expression of overwhelming penitence.

He couldn't know, of course, that George was fighting back an almost uncontrollable impulse to offer him a saucer of cream and a sardine. . . .

GARDENS.

I NEVER see a garden anywhere
That I do not see God walking there.

In all gardens man has made
With his rake and hoe and spade,
Lacy with leaf-light and shade—
God moves down each moist brown row
To watch the tender green things grow.

Every little kitchen plot,

Every small, bright tended spot

On the humblest back-street lot,

Pleases God and there He stays

Through the growing summer days.

Often after warm sweet rain,
Through the crimson petal stain
There His footprints show quite plain.
Who can doubt it when we know
That He loves all gardens so?

I never see a garden anywhere
That I do not see God walking there.
GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

THE DAUGHTER OF CONSTANTINE BRUMMEL

By JOHN WATT

ILLUSTRATED BY W. BRYCE HAMILTON

T may be that you have never heard of Constantine Brummel. But erudite students of the by-ways of literature will tell you that he is the greatest living novelist; and if you continue research on your own account you will find that he is dead. But his work, as they say, still lives, and the most interesting portion of it, though no less difficult to understand than the rest, is his daughter, Jennifer.

Jennifer lived with her mother in Pommery St. Mary—which is pronounced, oddly enough, as it is spelt—a little village in Berkshire, sufficiently far from London to be "the country," if not the county, and sufficiently close not to be a nuisance. There they lived on the slender income and the still more slender reputation left by Constantine. The house bequeathed to them, though small, was "period" and its size was ample for their needs, since neither of them lived in the present: Mrs. Brummel existed on memories of past glories and Jennifer on hopes of the future. The only other occupant of the house, the little maidservant, did not live there at all; she came in the morning, performed the more onerous of the household duties and departed into the night.

With the delvings into the past of Mrs. Brummel—or, as she preferred to be called, Mme. Brummel—since they dealt almost exclusively with her husband, there is no need to trouble. She was an amiable lady who made no pretence to having any brains, and indeed such pretence would have been vain. Also she had a habit of recalling on the slightest provocation irrelevant details in the life of the great man.

"I remember when Constantine was in Vienna," she would say, "or was it Brussels? . . ." and her voice would trail querulously away. She would invariably end by saying, "Of course, Constantine and Jennifer have all the brains in this family, I know, but still . . ." A dear, diffident, tiresome lady!

But the hopes of Jennifer ran high. They ran towards matrimony. They ran towards wealth. And rather more occasionally they ran towards the less comprehensive arts. If only she could meet a man who would propose the first, possess the second, and not be too scornful of the third, her somewhat youthful notions of human joy would be fulfilled. Therefore, she was keen to attend the dance of Lady Belfort, patroness of the liberal arts and post-University governess to rich young men.

It was true Jennifer often went out, but not often did she have the opportunity to meet the kind of man possessing all the virtues she demanded. The parties she frequented were usually composed of struggling authors and of authors who had ceased to struggle. At these conversation reached a high pitch of intensity, but the results possible from a matrimonial point of view were nil

- "Of course you've read---?"
- "Of course."
- "Wonderful, isn't it?"
- "Great.

"In my opinion it's the greatest thing he's done since . . ." which wasn't by him at all. Naturally such intellectual treats as these were always open to the daughter of Constantine Brummel. Was not his reputation among the first in Europe? Was he not great? Was he not read? The answer, unfortunately, to all these questions is "No!"

Since, however, it was this reputation that procured Jennifer her invitation to Lady Belfort's, perhaps we may be permitted to touch upon it. Mr. Brummel's fame largely rests on the work The Imperial Violet, an epic novel in which Napoleon s'en va-t'en guerre with even greater tedium than Marlborough. This was backed up by an even longer work on the conquests of Alexander. The paraphrase of Susanah and the Elders, in which the exciting parts were treated in full detail, was the only book of his that enjoyed any large sale, and that only among a restricted circle who were misled by the title.

A collection of poems and bon mots, Chips of Porcelain, fluttered many a dovecote north of the Fulham Road. Only one epigram, however, had a wide circulation, but so largely by word of mouth that no royalties could be collected.

Now, having sketched the antecedents of Jennifer, it may be permitted to pass to the moment when she emerges from her taxi, clad in sumptuous robes, before the house of Lady Belfort. The butler who opened the door to her received the full benefit of this vision framed in a Georgian arch. To say that she was beautiful is unnecessary; that she was young was obvious to the most casual observer; that she was intellectual was equally apparent from the style of her hair-dressing. butler, who was used to many such, was most impressed by the first item.

Needless to say, Jennifer was late. Was there ever a woman as arrestingly beautiful as Jennifer who could resist that last-minute entry? Most people had arrived as she mounted the absurdly large staircase, displaying the shell-pink bead-covered dress that the removal of her cloak had revealed. Many of them stood in little huddled knots, smoking and trying to revive themselves with comparatively fresh air after the heat of the ball-room. Jennifer passed through them with a proud disdain that was three parts shyness; the other quarter was the consciousness that people were looking at her—that, of course, was the idea, but she was young enough not to have got over a certain embarrassment. Unfortunately, the dignity of her entrance was slightly spoiled.

As she mounted the first step of the stairway, one of the wayward strings of beads that made her dress caught on the balustrade and, as she advanced, slowly unwound.

A young man who was standing at the foot of the stairs watched the thread unfurl with an amused half-smile on his face until. when Jennifer had gone some way up, the thread tautened and, feeling a pull on her dress, she looked down. Then the young man, still smiling, walked casually over and, taking the thread, pretended to pull himself up as if on a life-line till he stood on the same stair as the girl.

"Well, Ariadne?" he said. And here, you will observe, is where the story actually begins.

Jennifer looked at him, unable to make up her mind whether to smile or to be angry with him. Eventually she smiled.

"My name isn't Ariadne," she said.
"Why not?" he replied. "There is some suitable quotation about a rose; but let that pass. My own name is Denis, but not, I hope, in the American sense. Shall we dance?"

"But I haven't seen Lady Belfort yet." "Bless you, nor have I; and I've been here half an hour. 'S matter of fact, I'm not sure that she knows me. 'Course, she doesn't know half the people here. I've seen her shake hands with a ducal-looking waiter, just to be on the safe side. In these days when waiters look like dukes and dukes—but we can't go into all that now. Do let's dance!"

They danced; and even if their dancing was not a poem of perfect motion, their steps fitted well enough for the process to be quite agreeable. The dance over, they went to find a place to sit out.

As they wandered leisurely through the house Jennifer studied her extempore escort. Item: he was young. He couldn't possibly be more than thirty, she decided, or else there would be more lines on his face; round the eyes especially. There was a deep wrinkle by his mouth, but that was probably due to laughing. No; about 23. good-looking. Well, Item: obviously. Item: well-dressed. The evening clothes were as faultless as modern tailoring will allow. They were new-looking, too. most people make their evening clothes last for years, so—Item: probably rich. Besides, if those diamonds in his cuff-links were real—and they looked real—he must be rich. General summary: very satisfactory, thank you.

They found a settee near a conservatory

and sat down. Jennifer leant back and waited. She expected him to make love to her. It was usual; it was done.

"D'you know," he said, leaning across to her, "that I think you're devilish attractive?" This was poor. She had hoped for something less hackneyed than this, the old Queen's Pawn opening. She laughed at him.

"You haven't told me your name yet."

"But I have; it's Denis."

"No; your other name."

"Does that matter? Isn't it enough that I love you?"

"Oh, sir, this is so sudden!" and she

laughed again.

"Well, 's matter of fact, it's Carruthers," he said a little sulkily. He was not used to being laughed at, this young man.

"Do you spell it with one r or two?"

she asked.

"How particular you are! 'S matter of fact, with three. But one of 'em comes at the end," he added apologetically. "And yours?"

"I'm Jennifer Brummel."

"Not the daughter of ?"

"Yes."

She felt suddenly rather ashamed of her father's reputation; as though a man like this, who looked as though he loved the open air, would not much care for the daughter of so indoor a writer as—well, Constantine Brummel. And she wanted him to care.

At this moment there emerged from the conservatory a girl on the arm of a young man. The girl nodded brightly to Denis and passed on.

"Do you know her?" asked Jennifer.

"Who is she?"

"Yes. She's—just a girl I know."

"What a fascinating dress!" said Jennifer, watching the retreating figure.

The other girl was wearing a dress of green charmeuse trimmed with—but is it necessary to pursue the matter? The other girl was dressed in green. Let it go at that.

The two on the settee sat silent for a moment and what is usually known as "an exotic scent of hothouse flowers" drifted out to them.

Denis rose.

"Let's get out of this," he said, and began to walk off in the opposite direction to that taken by the girl in green.

When they reached the ball-room Denis turned to her. "Do you mind," he said,

"if I push you off on to someone else for this dance? I've really promised this one to somebody else."

"Of course not. I can't expect you to devote all your valuable time to me."

He made a wry face, but took her over all the same to another partner; and there he left her while he went off to look for the somebody else.

It was an excessively young man to whom she was introduced and he possessed the Oxford manner almost to the point of rudeness. They danced; and, though the new young man danced a good deal better than Denis, somehow Jennifer did not seem to enjoy the process so much. She even committed the sin of talking. Perhaps it may be forgiven her as she was so anxious to find out something about her newly acquired friend and courtier, Denis Carruthers—with three r's.

She began cautiously.

"I suppose you know everyone here? I feel almost an outsider, you know."

The protective instinct and pride of superiority of the Oxford young man rushed to her aid.

"Well, sort of, yes. Most of the people worth knowing, you know."

He was about to expand the theme when she quickly cut in, with the deftness of long experience in dealing with bores.

"Lady Belfort, of course, I know. But almost no one else. Except Denis Carruthers, but even him I don't know terribly well." Her eyes were candour itself. Why not? She was telling the truth: she didn't

know Denis very well.

"Oh, of course I've known him for some time, you know, sort of," the young man replied. "He's something of a mystery, you know. Great friend of the Belfort woman; pots of money; staying in the house. Comes from the Argentine, I believe, or some wild place." All places other than Oxford seemed to his tutored mind to be wild.

At this moment the girl in green floated by in the arms of Denis. Young Oxford chuckled.

"He also knows which side his bread is buttered."

"How do you mean—bread is buttered?" asked Jennifer.

"Don't you know who that wench in green is? Surely! Thought everyone did. Thought everyone knew how her dollars made up for facial delinquencies. She's Patricia Rickard, daughter of the baking-



"Jennifer looked at him, unable to make up her mind whether to smile or to be angry with him. Eventually she smiled. 'My name isn't Ariadne,' she said."

powder wallah; she's the richest and most pudding-faced heiress in London."

"Oh!" said Jennifer.

"Imagine! A name like Patricia and features like Sarah! Still, the baking-powder raises the dough. Which, as a joke, is not bad, eh?"

Jennifer, to his chagrin, did not laugh; she continued to dance in silence.

Young Oxford continued to prattle.

"You know, he's absolutely out after her. Shouldn't have thought he need, 'cos he's got enough money of his own. But these rich blokes always want more. Wouldn't care to take the damsel on myself, although I haven't a bean. Too many disadvantages. But Poppa Bi-Carbonate smiles on friend Denis's suit. Likes him or something. It looks like a wow."

Jennifer assented coldly.

When the dance was over and Denis came to claim her, the coldness remained.

He sensed the trouble and set about to

disperse it.

"Terrible bore, those duty dances!" ae said.

"You appeared to be enjoying yourself," she answered.

"Naturally. You wouldn't have me look as weary as I felt?"

"Why should you think it matters to me how you look?"

"Oh, lady," he replied, "thou art unkind."

She was also, thought Jennifer, unwise. This was not the way to win Sir Knight. She must pit herself against her pudding-faced but opulent rival. There must be a silent battle between the other's abounding wealth and her own abounding charms; red gold versus red hair. So it was with a good grace and a ravishing smile that she accepted Denis's invitation to dine with him the following evening. On parting he held her hand for the exactly right second too long, and Jennifer smiled approvingly. That was the only thing of any possible interest that occurred at Lady Belfort's.

DENIS called for Jennifer the next evening at Pommery St. Mary in a perfectly colossal car. Jennifer was not, of course, ready, and Mme. Brummel entertained him lavishly with snatches of autobiography. He made upon the excellent lady a very good impression, for she admitted to Jennifer in the morning that she found him quite charming.

"And so intelligent, dear. Often these

wealthy people are such—— But that's the fault of the system. The interest he showed in—— Of course, one doesn't know if he was *sincere*, but—— It's all a question of taste, of course."

Can you wonder that Jennifer wanted to marry, if only for the sake of hearing a completed sentence at breakfast? Denis was at last released from the thrall of La belle dame sans Syntax by the arrival of Jennifer, looking radiant over a collar of white fur. The two of them departed in the colossal car.

They dined and danced; and Jennifer returned home, only to be dragged again the following night, and the next and the next... Poor Denis was in that state of ecstatic idiocy which very minor poets associate with the spring and St. Valentine's Day. Jennifer watched him wriggle with a cold and expert eye, but it was not for a fortnight that she pulled the line tight. Denis proposed that on Sunday they should forswear metropolitan haunts and drive out into the hills and moors and there walk till they were tired on springy turf among the gorse. They went.

The car took them as far as Wymshurst, and from there they walked into sweet-

smelling woods.

"Why on earth do people go and live in towns," Denis asked suddenly as they walked along, "when there's all this sort of thing?"

Jennifer looked at him sideways and he

turned to meet her glance.

"No, don't bother!" he went on. "That was a purely rhetorical question not deserving or expecting an answer of any kind. But, honestly, these voluntary town-dwellers do amaze me."

"You seemed fairly cheerful in London,"

she replied.

"For a very obvious reason. And the reason is just as potent out of town." She smiled. "Don't you love the open?"

"Of course," she replied, and went on to quote part of a poem in which "rippling brook" and "hidden nook" were the most

noteworthy and original rhymes.

"No, I don't quite mean that sort of country," he said, "but the real thing. Building hayricks, and cows calving in the middle of the night, and manure; that's the real country. The 'rippling brook' business is simply an ornament grafted on by Cockney tourists. My ambition is to breed pigs or something ten miles from anywhere; yet I'm chained to London."

Jennifer did not express her horror of breeding anything at a greater distance than ten miles from the Reading Room of the British Museum—even then Pekinese were as far as she would care to go—but said, "Shall we sit down here?"

"Tired?"

Jennifer wasn't tired. She could have gone on for hours, especially in "sensible" shoes—she knew the male opinion of unsuitably clothed women in the country. But this was a good place to sit down. The time was ripe. She admitted she was tired.

"Poor wee thing, have I kept you up too

late o' nights?"

As they lolled on the bank, wisps of her hair fluttering loose touched his hand. It didn't look untidy; just contributed to the freedom of atmosphere implicit in a Fair Isle jumper.

He leant towards her.

"Do you know, Jennifer dear," he said, "that you've been getting more and more adorable every day?"

She nodded.

"You little wretch, you did know? Well, I don't care; I'll tell you all over again. Adorable! And did you know I was getting crazy over you? Sounds like a foxtrotlyric, but it's true. You marvellous person, I want to make you robes of kisses and hold you tight in my arms. Well, not quite tight; the only intoxication should be your presence, but you know what I mean. Jennifer dear, I really do love you; honest-to-goodness I do. And—well, 's matter of fact, I want to marry you, or rather I want you to marry me. Will you? Say 'yes.'"

Instead she said, "You dear idiotic thing!" and put her arms round his neck, with never a mention of the girl in green. And for the rest of the day it is only tactful

that they should be left alone.

DENIS called upon her early the next morning. With him he brought—in addition to the enormous car—a ring of equal magnificence but less magnitude.

"But how too marvellous!" said Jennifer.

"Like it?"

"Of course, I adore it," and was just going to put it on the appropriate finger.

"Just a moment before you put it on," Denis cut in. "I've got something to

"What is it?" she asked. Her voice was hard and she tried to stop it trembling.

"Do you want to break off the engagement?"

"Lord, no. But I wasn't sure whether you would after I've made my confession."
"What confession is there to make?"

"Oh, nothing very much. At least, I don't think it's anything very much, but women have queer ideas on these subjects. Briefly, my confession is that I am a fake. I am not, lady, all that you thought me, thank Heaven. You imagined, I suppose. that I was a rich man; I appeared so; that was the idea. But I'm not. I came back after a hectic career of punching cows in the Argentine with something under a thousand pounds and no prospects. The only job that seemed at all lucrative seemed to be to marry a rich wife; so I invested some of my capital in clothes, hire of car and other trifles, and set about the pursuit of that girl you saw in green. She's the daughter of some boot-blacking mag-

"Baking-powder," said Jennifer auto-

matically.

"You're quite right; baking-powder. Anyway, all went well till I met you, and now, carissima, I am a ruined man. I love you with such idiotic desperation that I couldn't marry anyone else if I wanted to. And I don't."

"You dare to come and tell me all this?"

There is nothing, lady, I would not dare

for your sweet sake."

"You say you are a ruined man and yet you come and ask me to marry you? I never heard such—such cheek in my life."

"I'm not so ruined as all that. I've still got a little money left. Enough to buy some slight farm somewhere and screw a living out of that. Never fear; I'll keep you in 'the comfort to which you are accustomed.' You see, I know the exact amount of comfort you are accustomed to."

"And you think I want to stay like that always? What sort of wife do you think I should make to a poor man? Pinching and saving every penny. I'm not that kind. I want lots of clothes and plenty of

monev."

"So you were going to marry me because you thought I had plenty of money?"

"Did you flatter yourself that there could

be any other reason?"

"Frankly, I did. But I'm glad to be disillusioned. Oh, as pleased as Punch to have my eyes opened in time. But mightn't you have used a less crude can-opener?"

"I think you had better go," said Jenni-





"'Do you know, Jennifer dear,' he said, 'that you've been getting more and more adorable every day?'"

fer, "and take back the ring; you may find

it useful for the girl in green."

"Thank you. I admit that at the moment the idea of returning to the slightly piqued bosom of Miss Rickard does not appeal to me. I shall prefer to spend the rest of the day alone, but in time, no doubt, I shall take, not to drink, but to boot-blacking—I beg your pardon, baking-powder."

"Your car, your 'taxi,' is ticking up shillings outside. So wasteful for a poor man." And she turned her back on him to hide the trembling of her lips and the

tears of chagrin in her eyes.

"Good-bye," he said; and went.

Jennifer did not sleep well that night. She had been swindled, there was no other word for it, swindled. She would never forgive Denis as long as she lived; she promised herself that. But all the time she knew she would. She was honest and deep down inside herself she knew that she had forgiven him already. When he had gone out of the room, gone from her, when the first shock of damaged vanity had passed, she had rushed to the window to see his shoulders disappearing down the road, bent over the wheel.

Through the night her thoughts kept pace with the little clock that ticked out so incredibly loud, like a tap dripping in some gargantuan bath-room. "I'll never see him

again. I'll never see him again."

What was the good of ever seeing him again? He couldn't keep her in garters in the style she wanted to be kept. No, she must marry a rich man. She couldn't face a life of poverty, even comparative poverty. But still she might not find her rich man. Then she would have to face the poverty alone. Or if she did, she might be miserable; or he might be fat or old or a stockbroker or—anyway, he wouldn't be Denis. That was the point, he wouldn't be Denis. "I'll never see him again. I'll never see him again. I'll never see him again."

If she had to be poor, wasn't it better to be poor with Denis? And happy? After all, he loved her. Oh, he must; he couldn't be playing about if he told her what he had in the morning. And she herself, she discovered, quite incredibly—what did she feel? She liked him, immensely—even after what he'd done. She was—perhaps that was too strong a word. He was rather wonderful. The way he walked—with a swing—sort of—— After all, maybe it wasn't too strong a word . . . At this point Jennifer went to sleep.

The morning found Jennifer unrepentant. She sat in the window puzzling things out. Mme. Brummel, pottering about in busy idleness with flowers, was not conversational: her daughter was in a "mood"—"these temperamental people. La, la!"—and it

was best to leave her alone.

"He loves me. I love him. Yes, that was the word . . . Why shouldn't I ring him up? This isn't the nineteenth century with bustles and conventions and things; nor the eighteenth, without either, 'cos there weren't any telephones then. I love him. He loves me."

A woman could ring up a man without his thinking she was pursuing him. She was pursuing him, but he wouldn't think so. Would he, now?

'She lifted the receiver. Mr. Carruthers was in. Mr. Carruthers would speak to her. Mr. Carruthers did speak to her for twenty-seven minutes, Greenwich Mean Time. And then he came flying down to see her.

"Jennifer darling"—as he burst in— "you did mean what you said? Honest

and truly you did?"

"Yes. And you?"

"Marvellous person. I adore you more than anything in the world. And you do like me a little bit?"

"Just a little," she said with her smile;

and indicated how much.

So that was how it was that Jennifer assisted in the breeding of pigs in Leicestershire. It was not the sort of thing one would have expected the daughter of Constantine Brummel to do, but there is absolutely no evidence that she was not extremely happy doing it.





THE MAN I KNOW AS BENITO MUSSOLINI

By SHAW DESMOND 0

Photographs by Flli. D'Amico, Rome.

USSOLINI is not a man. He is a force. It had always seemed to me before I met the dark-eyed, olive-skinned Italian that people took one of two attitudes to him. They either loved or hated him. Mussolini admits of no mean.

When he told me in a Roman palace in urgent words that human courage fired by

a single spark of imagination could move the world he was expressing his own philosophy.

When I saw him once, holding literally

in the hollow of his voice one hundred thousand men and women in the Piazza Colonna. dominating them from the famous corner balcony of the room whence he rules Italy. I recognised that it was this "spark" which had made him a maker of history.

When he said to me, with that almost dreadful impassivity of face, that "Fiftyfour of us made the march on Rome and so

> led to a new Italy," I knew that, for good or ill, this "force," single-handed, like the apostles of old, could move mountains.



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For Benito Mussolini is a fanatic, with all the force that fanaticism gives.

Only one solitary thing can stop the force that is Benito Mussolini. That is the assassin's bullet . . . and but for a time!

For I am of those who, having observed over long months the Mussolini method, believe that even in death the turbulent, fated soul of the dictator will, like John Brown's, "go marching on."

Assassination does not mean the end of men like Mussolini. It may only mean the

beginning.

For good or ill, perhaps for both, Benito Mussolini has loosed forces throughout Europe which can never again be leashed—at least not until they have spent themselves.

Here it is my business to show the man through his method. "By their deeds shall ye know them." The basic error of most of the attempts to consider il Duce has been the attempt to consider the man apart from his work.

Put into a sentence, Mussolini six years ago found Italy the prey of the politicians. He found her with one of the lowest standards of life in Europe. He found the Italian not even knowing he was an "Italian," speaking of himself as a Piedmontese, a Lombardian, and so on.

He found a country in which tuberculosis and disease were rife, even though it was the first country in Europe, and so early as the sixteenth century, to recognise consumption as infectious. He found superstition and dirt the common portion of certain areas and a malaria that was, literally, poisoning Italy. And he found "the Mafia," of which I shall later speak.

Benito Mussolini has wiped out party politics. He has raised the physical standard of life by anything from forty to fifty per cent. He has made the Italian patriotic—

sometimes eccentrically so.

He has caught consumption by the throat and lowered the death-rate. He has, excepting certain parts of the south, made Italy as clean as many other European countries. And, his most difficult task, he has dragged the Mafia sting out by the roots—Mafia and the thing that is so like it—the mosquito.

How has he done all this?

Not without pain and suffering and self-sacrifice, rest assured. Not without stamping down and through nearly all that the Britisher calls democracy. Not without riding roughshod through what the rest of

Europe regards as the most elementary rights of freedom.

Put bluntly, and without offering any personal opinion whatever as to whether it is desirable or not, here is the Mussolini method.

First of all, absolute discipline and the demand for unquestioning obedience.

Secondly, the view that the citizen is the servant of the State, and that the State is supreme.

Lastly, the constant demand for fresh sacrifice and fresh service.

Do you know why Ron

Do you know why Benito Mussolini has made all Italy reel after him . . . and parts of Europe?

It is because he makes appeal to the two fundamentals of human nature—sacrifice and romance. As the Fascisti regard them—the heavenly twins.

Once he said to me: "We will have nothing to do with demagogues who offer everything and ask for nothing." And then: "Italy demands sacrifice."

Mussolini never argues. He does not permit argument. He only, in council, permits suggestions having practical value. When politicians say, "It can't be done," he says, "It must be done." And it always, not sometimes, is done.

Take the Mussolini method applied to tuberculosis.

For many decades Italy had been playing about with the consumption that was eating the country up. The politicians and even the scientists said that to cope with it properly would bankrupt Italy. Then Mussolini got to work.

He called the scientists and the statesmen together in a great tuberculosis conference in Rome. He gave the watchword and set the pace to those who had said that it could not be done in the following words:

"The method must stand in exact relation both as regards scope and cost to the task to be done. We want a national, not a local plan, and now. Only the State can fight what is a danger to the State." On its heels followed a National Anti-Consumption Union, with a fighting executive to lead the battle in each province, each separately responsible.

When I was in middle Italy the other day, I saw scores and scores of sanatoria with miles and miles of balconies upon which the beds of young consumptive Italy were laid. Along these beds moved Mussolini himself—that Mussolini who had initiated the battle by substantial contributions from his



Photo) IL DUCE.

[Concess, Pandimiglio Rome.

own purse. For each child he had a smile or a handshake.

The word ran like wildfire through Italy that il Duce himself had taken charge. The sight of the ardent Italian, walking about amongst the sick, was to the Italian mind kin to miracles. The children literally seemed to them to take up their beds and walk. The mortality rate went down. Within a generation, Italy will have stamped out tuberculosis.

Italy had another scourge—almost more deadly than the tubercles of consumption.

conquer Europe. But he could not conquer the Mafia!

Murder went on in the broad noonday. Beatings and maimings, fire, outrage and sudden death were the daily portion of the Sicilians. When the carabinieri or the soldiers went after the bandits, they just laughed at them. No evidence!

Mussolini, sitting up there in that great room in the Palazzo Chigi where I once spoke with him for some hours, had the weight of a world on his broad shoulders. He had a hundred problems insistently knocking at



FASCISTI LEGIONARIES ASSEMBLED IN THE COLISEUM TO GREET MUSSOLINI DURING A CELEBRATION OF THE MARCH ON ROME.

That was the infamous "Mafia," the secret society in Sicily which was eating up the island. But Italy was honeycombed with secret societies.

Here was the Dictator's problem.

A society hallowed by a hundred years of tradition. An island in which every man, woman and child from the highest to the lowest paid tribute to the secret heads. A community in which no witnesses dared to speak, because of the death that trod swiftly upon testimony.

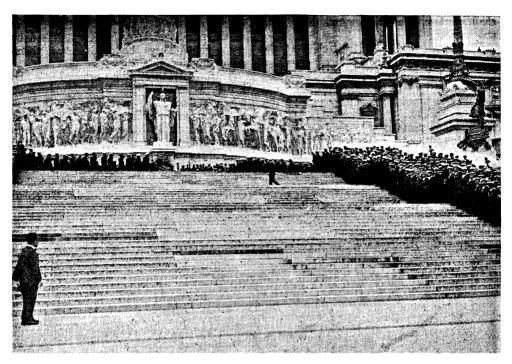
The secret heads laughed in their sleeves. Mussolini might conquer Italy. He might his door with assassination hanging over him like a sword of Damocles. Problems of food and of disease and of the trade unions. Could he find time to solve the unsolvable—the Mafia?

He did.

He went to Sicily to see how five millions of people could be dominated by five hundred. He always goes to see for himself. It is his secret.

Then he said: "I want a man."

"I want a man who not only has courage, but a man who does not know how to be afraid. When he is killed, I



LAYING A WREATH ON THE GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER AT THE VICTOR EMMANUEL MONUMENT, ROME.



AVANGUARDISTI (FASCISTI RECRUITS BETWEEN 18 AND 25).

shall want another man. And after him, another."

He chose one Cæsar Mori, chief of the Sicilian police. He could have chosen a thousand. For everywhere in Italy men rush forward to serve Mussolini, who has learned the lesson that when one gives up cajoling and, instead, demands sacrifice, poor old human nature, scoffed at, will always be ready to make the sacrifice.

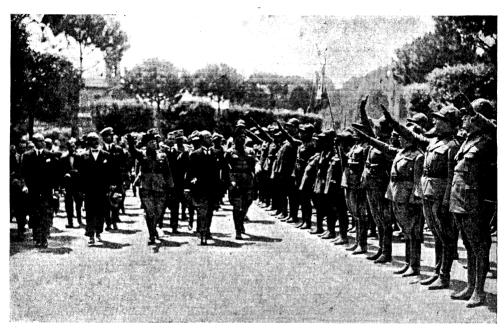
Mori was a man after Mussolini's own heart. A man with an iron will. A "just" man, as I was told in the South.

To this just man of iron his master said: "The way is plain. The secret is simple.

quarters of the Mafia's worst bands. It lay in the middle of the island, buttressed by mountains. These bands believed themselves invulnerable.

Then Mori threw his net. Little by little, he invested the town by his men, all pledged to death or victory, with Mussolini always watching behind. Bit by bit he drove back the bands into the town and then shut the drag-net. Four hundred and thirty dangerous ruffians fell into the net.

Then came the final strokes, hammer blow on hammer blow, all directed by Mussolini himself.



MUSSOLINI REVIEWING SOME OF HIS CHIEFS AND TAKING THE FASCIST SALUTE.

You can smash the Mafia in one way—and one way only: if you only suspect a man of being a member, you must send him to the punishment settlements."

That meant sending him into hell, for the Devil's Island has nothing on some of the Italian forced labour colonies.

Brutal? Undemocratic? Unfair?

Yes. All three. I do not justify it. But it did the Mafia's business!

"If you only imagine that an official, however high, stands in with the Mafia, fire him!" That was the second instruction. And he was fired.

Then came the third stroke.

The fortress-town of Gangi was the head-

Mayors and high officials were arrested. The net was full.

The trial of the leaders was rushed forward at top speed, ere the Mafia could take concerted action. A month or two, or three, and the dreaded Mafia was broken into smithereens, its leaders literally set in their iron cage before their judges and behind them soldiers armed to the teeth—that cage which was the precursor of the awful cages of "the islands," from which men rarely return alive.

Exit Mafia!

And all this time, the Dictator was solving the labour question.

Strikes?

Lock-outs?

"We can't afford them!"

I can see the Dictator the day he said that to me with that pale smile, his plump white

It was the same man speaking in that vibrant low Italian of his that carries the length of a room like a stage whisper.

This man is not only destructive—he is



NOTE THE EXTRAORDINARY LIKENESS TO NAPOLEON.

fingers laid quietly on his knees as he sat in a high chair within two feet of me in the room where he works.

"Italy can't afford democracy!"

also constructive. It is the thing that perhaps marks him out from other dictators.

He told me how masters and men had been

brought together. How Italy had been divided into "spheres of influence" and of trades. How by the "horizontal" and the "vertical" method, the technicians as the workers of each separate trade were welded into the same "union," masters and men both forming national instead of sectional or political unions.

"We have organised the nation into a vast corporation," said the genius behind the new national plan. And he added certain words which I think every country in Europe which aspires to hold or to win the world markets may one day have to take to heart: "What we are driving at is the conscription economically of all Italian citizens."

Italy, in a word, as he said, is mobilising for peace as other countries mobilise for war.

Mussolini is supposed to be a fire-eater. Perhaps he is and perhaps he isn't. But here are the words he used to me about a new World War. We had been speaking about the last war, and the awful march of poison gas invention since that war on the lines of a novel of mine in which he was much interested. He looked at me a moment

in that steadfast inburning way of his, and then he said with a certain solemn emphasis as though he were in church:

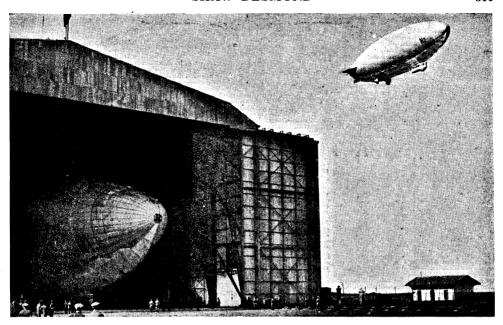
"I don't deny the friction and the dissensions which still indubitably exist between the Great Powers, but I do say this: no man in his senses, with the memory of the awful tragedy of 1914–1918 still fresh, would dare to loose a new war, which would be even more fearful than the last."

And he proved to me in that convincing way of which he is master, that Italy dare not fight for long years. That she needed every lira with which to build up the new Italy, three hundred millions of which have already been expended or are about to be expended upon draining the fever swamp that is Calabria. And I remember the words that followed, delivered with that almost shy modesty that, as opposed to the stories about him, is so common with Benito Mussolini: "One thing is certain. England and Italy, old allies, will never be found to stand against one another on the battlefield."

And this man who talks of world wars, who stamps out secret societies, and who in dealing with his enemies is ruthless, has also



THE DICTATOR IN RIDING DRESS MARCHING FROM A MASS MEETING AT THE COLISEUM AT WHICH HE DEMANDED "FRESH SACRIFICES" FROM ITALY.



ITALY'S FIGHT FOR HER PLACE IN THE AIR.

the heart of a child. (Mussolini is one of the few European statesmen who can still blush!)

He loves his own children—children which his wife, in a country where birth-control is illegal, presents to him at regular intervals

Children to him are not only objects of affection to be loved as only the Italian can love the child who has not yet passed his sixth or seventh year. They are instruments to be used when *il Duce* calls.

Italy to-day is Europe's breeding-ground. The Italian family, except the Irish, is the most numerous in Europe. Nevertheless, the "shadow" of birth control, as *il Duce* would call it, has made its appearance.

He loves children in his own Spartanic

I have seen him with a corps of balilla, or boy fascisti, as though he were their comrade and playmate. But it was also the same man I saw, within a few hours, returning from the Coliseum, where, stern as sculptured gladiator, he had told the crowd with brutal frankness: "Italy wants fresh—ever fresh sacrifices." And I have seen the crowd drunk with an almost religious fervour as they swore allegiance!

I will not here speak of what I imagine he thinks of women, because although he and I once held converse on that most delicate and difficult of subjects, I do not even now know what he really thinks.

I only know that he said the other day to a friend of mine: "I will never say what I really think about women!"

But even in the saying, I remember always that Italy is a woman-state, with the soul of a woman, run as a patriarchate by often fiercely male men. And I remember that Mussolini will have no woman to hold any reins. The woman must wait—and weep—and serve.

He did once say to me that woman's work in the building up of the future Italy was not amongst the "Blackshirts" or Camecienere. "We don't allow the woman to wear the shirt of the Fascisti," he said.

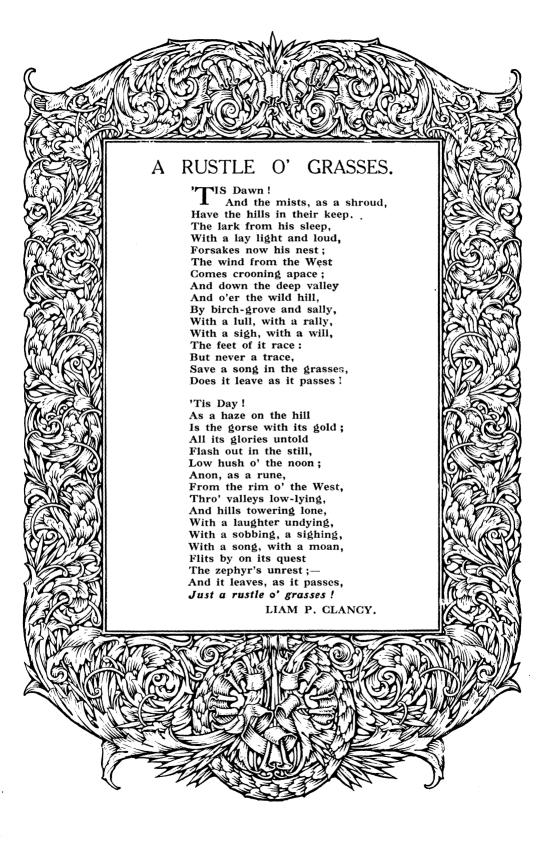
Is it—fatal thought—that the only thing of which Benito Mussolini is afraid is woman?

Yet every woman in Italy is in love with him!

Well, there stands Benito Mussolini, good or bad, wise or foolish, sane or mad—as you choose.

There he stands, a tyrant with the heart of a child. A dictator soft to his friends, iron hard to his foes. A destroyer who knows how to construct. A conqueror who always wins his enemies to be his friends.

The best loved man in Europe. The best hated man in Europe, Benito Mussolini,





ISport and General.

SIR HENRY SEGRAVE'S "MISS ENGLAND."
Winner of the World's Motor-boat Speed Championship at Miami.

MOTOR-BOAT RACING FOR ALL

By COUNT JOHNSTON-NOAD

Vice-Commodore of the British Motor Boat Club and Founder of the British Outboard Racing Club.

HREE of the most important races for motor-boats were held on the Thames at the end of June, and Londoners were able to watch some of the world's finest speed boats in action. The Duke of York's International Trophy for 1½ litre motor-boats and the Harmsworth Trophy and Star Trophy for outboards are only three of the many prizes which are raced for in various parts of the country during the summer, since motor-boat racing is now experiencing unprecedented popularity in Britain. Apart from being both fascinating and thrilling, it has the advantage of cheapness.

Whereas a private owner who wishes to race his car must be prepared to spend several thousands a year, the speed fiend

can satisfy his craving by motor-boat racing for a sum considerably less than that required to maintain a light car! Four or five years ago a racing boat to carry six at a speed of 30 knots cost about £1,500; today a similar craft can be purchased for between £500 and £600, while the cost of an outboard boat to carry a pilot and one passenger is only about £100. An excellent racing outboard can even be acquired for as little as £50.

Upkeep forms a very small item, since there is no horse-power tax on motor-boats. A subscription to a club, together with accommodation for the boat, entry fees and fuel, would be covered by less than £20 a year. An enthusiast might easily win as much as that in prizes.



[Sport and General.

COUNT JOHNSTON-NOAD'S "MISS BETTY." Twice winner of the Duke of York's International Trophy.

Although I have piloted many racing boats in all parts of the world, I acknowledge that there is as much sensation of speed and as much sport to be gained from a tiny outboard boat as from a high-powered motor-boat. What is not generally understood is that speed is entirely relative. A man on a bicycle travelling at fifty miles an hour would gain much more "sensation" than a man doing the same speed in a car. In an aeroplane fifty miles an hour would appear a crawl! For all conditions except wind pressure the 40 knots which is the maximum speed achieved by outboards is equivalent to car racing at 100 m.p.h., and

aeroplane racing at double

that speed.

Racing motor-boats do not travel in the water but on it, a "step" halfway down the boat raising them so that they plane as soon as a high speed is attained. many boats the rudder is fixed in the middle of the hull instead of at the end, thus giving a good streamline and enabling driver to "skid" his boat round corners. Cornering is, indeed, half the art of motor-boat racing. It is hardly too much to say that races are lost or won Those the corners. valuable fractions of a second saved by cornering at full speed as near

to the mark as possible make just the difference in a race when as many as twenty turns have to be made.

The motor-boat expert is not made in a day. Unless great care is exercised at the corners, the pilot is thrown out, and even if he were not stunned by the force of the impact, he might be seriously injured by a blow from another oncoming boat. Fortunately such accidents are extremely rare - unknown, in fact, in outboard rac-Moreover, the lifeing.

saving jacket, which every competitor is compelled to wear, excludes any danger from drowning. In comparison with other highspeed racing, motor-boat racing is remarkably safe, though there are few pilots who have not experienced many close shaves.

The luckiest escape I have ever had was, I think, in one of the races for the Duke of York's International Trophy on the Thames. The Thames is excellent racing water from the spectators' point of view, but it has a great deal of floating rubbish which fouls the propeller, while sunken logs are a real danger. On this occasion I was travelling all-out at about 40 knots

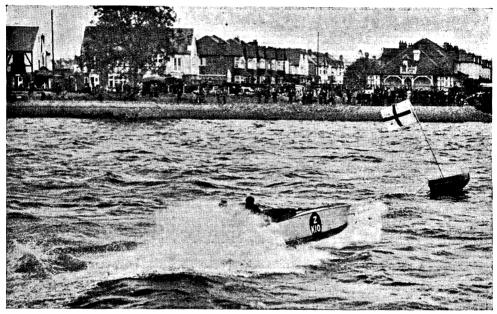


SUSSEX MOTOR-BOAT CLUB'S LONG DISTANCE OUTBOARD RACE ON THE THAMES.

when we hit something. Before I knew what was happening the boat had leaped up the bank, making straight for a fence. We were helpless, but by some miracle the boat bounced neatly off the fence and into the water again without capsizing!

Motor-boat racing is usually considered a summer sport in this country, but our summers are sufficiently fickle to make it interesting. Driving through rain in a tiny boat on a rough sea at 40 knots is a terrifying experience to the novice. The boat crashes from wave to wave in a series of jumps, just like a motor-cycle travelling on

boat, Miss Betty. I managed to win the first of the two races for the Duke of York's International Trophy at a speed of 32·175 knots. The weather on the second day was really dirty, and we had a very rough time. The consideration of speed soon disappeared before that of getting round the course at any cost. The force of the wind was terrific; before we had gone far it ripped off the beading round the deck and blew it clean over our heads. Next the petrol feed pipe became loose as a result of the unusual strain, but my mechanic held it in position with his hand whilst I drove.



[Topical,

MISS CARSTAIRS'S "NEWG" ROUNDING THE MOORED BOAT IN THE MOTOR-BOAT RACE FOR THE DUKE OF YORK'S CUP.

a very rough road, and it is all the pilot can do to keep his seat. One has to close the throttle every time the boat leaps into the air to prevent the propeller racing and thus damaging the motor. The raindrops are as hard as hailstones, and can draw blood from the face, while the waves seem to be made of iron, thudding against the thin bottom of the boat in a continuous succession of ripples.

It was in such weather that my boat Miss Empire, after winning many races, was finally swamped by heavy seas and lost in Southampton Water. I had an almost similar experience in 1924 at Tor Bay, whilst racing in rough weather with a later

It seemed that in spite of our bad luck we might get round and win the Trophy for Britain, but our troubles were not over. The Fleet chose that precise moment to return from manœuvres and the wash of a cruiser caught *Miss Betty* and tossed her a dozen feet into the air. When she came down, she sprang a leak and began to sink. Fortunately a rescue party reached us before she foundered, and *Miss Betty* was towed in—to race another day!

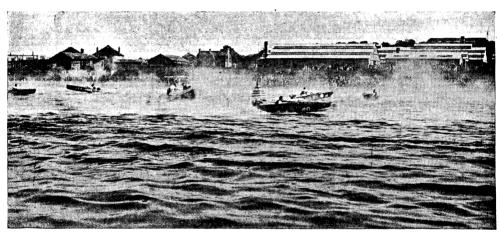
Racing under such conditions is, of course, exceptional, and in the ordinary way it is a pleasant sport. It is delightfully cool on a hot summer's day and quite free from the dust, grime and smoke usually associated

with motor racing. One of the greatest problems now being tackled is that of noise. A noisy boat is a nuisance to everybody and takes away half the enjoyment of cruising in quiet canals and rivers. Under the rules of outboard racing, only standard craft are allowed to take part, and they have to be efficiently silenced. "Cut-outs" are forbidden. The average lightweight outboard makes very little noise, and the experiments now being made by manufacturers should result in an engine which is much quieter than that of the normal motor-cycle.

It is interesting to trace the history of motor-boat speed records in this country, for it indicates in no uncertain fashion how

record for motor-boats of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ litre class at 39.45 knots, since this speed is now being attained by boats with far less powerful engines.

At least one British manufacturer has started making boats with supercharged outboard engines, and this will mean that speeds will increase even more rapidly. By enabling the engine to work on a high compression ratio a supercharger adds as much as 25 per cent. to the speed. Even now, although the engines have very low official ratings, they develop considerable power. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ litre engine, for example, is equivalent to that in the popular 12 h.p. car, but it develops over 100 h.p., and turns the



[Sport and General.

A RACE FOR THE DUCHESS OF YORK'S OUTBOARD MOTOR-BOAT TROPHY.

the outboard motor has revolutionised the sport. The outboard motor is fixed on to the stern of the craft, instead of being incorporated in the hull, as is the case in the inboard. This reduces the cost of building considerably and enables boats with engines of only 6 h.p. to achieve high speeds. The smallest outboard is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ h.p., while the most powerful run to about 15 h.p.

Outboards began to be taken seriously in this country about 1927, but they were popular in America the previous year. At an outboard race held near Chelsea in 1923, the winning speed was only 5.85 knots. A year or two later it had jumped to nearly 17 m.p.h., and in 1926 the world's record was 23.8 m.p.h. Nowadays very much higher speeds are attained, and this year Mr. Ralph Snoddy won the Duke of York's trophy for America with Riocco III at a speed of 44.11 m.p.h. It is interesting to think of the great efforts I made in 1927 to win the world's

knife-like propeller at something like 2,000 revolutions a minute.

The way the sport has increased in popularity in the last two years is remarkable. After Sir Henry Segrave had brought two American outboard boats over here and raced them in the Thames in 1927, the demand was astounding. Last year something like 10,000 units were imported from America, and I dare say the entry of British manufacturers into the field will result in even more craft being sold.

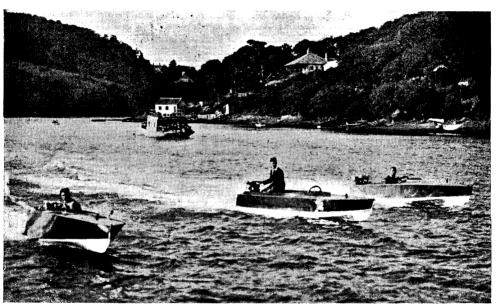
The British Motor Boat Club doubled its membership in a single year, and some 200 racing boats were registered with the body controlling the sport. When it is realised that there are over thirty clubs in the British Isles, the number of motor-boat owners can be estimated. One insurance company alone has stated that it has insured over £2,000,000 worth of these small craft.

Women in particular have taken kindly

to the new sport. The spectators at racing always contain a large proportion of the fair sex, and in Miss Carstairs we have one of the keenest racing experts in the world. In 1926 she won the Duke of York's Trophy in competition with the best drivers from Germany, America, France, Italy and Canada. Her little boat Newg held the world's speed record for its class for a long while. I managed to win it from her by a narrow margin when, in 1927, I covered a measured mile on Lake Windermere at an average speed of 39·45 knots.

The Hon. Mrs. Victor Bruce is another keen woman driver, and last year crossed the English Channel in the record time of not have to serve a long apprenticeship before taking part in the racing. While it is true that to become an expert means experience as well as teaching, it is also true that a novice can handle a boat after half an hour's practice. To let him race in the early stages would be dangerous for other competitors, but after he has been at it a week he would take part and stand a fair chance of success.

There is another reason why I believe that it is not merely a passing craze. The outboard boat, whether a dinghy or a craft specially built for racing, can be hitched up on a trailer behind a car and can be thus towed to any part of the country. After a



RACING ON THE YEALM RIVER, NEAR PLYMOUTH.

[Topical.

105 minutes. She has offered a cup for the fastest crossing registered this year. Many women who do not themselves drive are keen racing passengers, among them being Lady Louis Mountbatten, whose husband is Admiral of the British Motor Boat Club.

I am often told this enthusiasm for the motor-boat is only a passing craze, like dirt-track racing, and that as soon as a spectator has seen one or two races he will tire of it. I reply that when a spectator has seen one race, he will want nothing so much as to race himself. And once he has been a passenger and has experienced the thrill of cornering and accelerating, he will become a devotee of the sport. Fortunately he will

twenty-mile drive to some quiet spot, the motorist then unlimbers, fits up his engine in a couple of minutes, and spends his afternoon exploring a little-known canal or river.

Even if he has no car, he can make his way from the Thames, or wherever his boat is moored, up creeks and tributaries. The average man has no idea how much water there is available in Britain, and a glance at a few Ordnance Maps would probably surprise him. The crush on the main roads is driving those who seek peace and quiet to try the river and sea, where they can find adventure almost at their back door. Touring the coast is equally popular, and is a novel way of seeing one's native land. For

this, though, a much more substantial boat is required.

Outboard racing has been taken up enthusiastically by manufacturers because they realise that it has a definite bearing on industry. Outboard motors can be fitted to barges, and thus, in place of rowing or hauling, they can be propelled at a moderate speed with a minimum of outlay. The cost in comparison with an inboard engine is exceedingly small. This may well lead to the re-opening of many canals, for in spite of the advance of the railways and even of aviation, water still provides the cheapest form of transport for certain types of cargo.

Outboard racing, which is the baby of motor-boat racing, has not the expense or dangers of its parent sport. Most of the



Topical.

MERRY PARTIES OF HOLIDAY-MAKERS ENJOYING THE THRILLS OF SPEED BOATS ARE NOW FAMILIAR SIGHTS AT OUR SEASIDE RESORTS.

enthusiasts are not men and women of wealth, like car racers, but ordinary folk who want the thrill of speed without the cost and risk that usually accompany it.

Outboard racing, now in its second successful season in Great Britain, has been booming for a much longer period in America, and I do not know of a single fatal or even serious accident. If outboarding is to remain a popular sport it must be kept safe. Every pilot and passenger is compelled to wear a life-saving jacket, which insures floating if thrown out—most beginners take a few tosses but are none the worse except for a ducking. Collisions occur but seldom, as the rules of navigation are simple and yet complete, and in any case there is no danger from flying glass as with cars, and the speed of an outboard is not yet so great as to make falling

in the water like falling on the hard road.

Hair-raising stunts and dangerous racing are unnecessary in motor-boating, either with outboards or high-powered craft, and only bring the sport into ridicule. I shall always discourage anything of this nature, as success is not obtained by such means. Having driven boats from 8 to 80 miles per hour, which is as fast as Sir Henry Segrave's Miss England, and studied the subject, with practical experience in several countries for many years, I am convinced that success can be obtained by careful, consistent attention to detail and the training of oneself to be a perfect helmsman, counting more on a good start and the rounding of corners, calculating the distance to be covered and the time and speed available, while conserving the reserves of the boat to the utmost—in other words,

using your brain as well as your boat.

Motor-boat racing has also helped the makers of sea-planes in designing their floats, and experiments of the greatest importance are being made to determine the best possible position for the "step," so that the boat can glide with the minimum of resistance.

Motor-boating was one of the most popular sports in Britain before the War, but the great expense of hulls and engines resulted in its passing into the background until 1927.

Even now, although Sir Henry Segrave has put up a splendid performance for Britain, we do not hold the Blue Riband of the water. This is the British International Trophy, which has been in the possession of America for many years. The only competitor from Britain in 1928 was Miss Carstairs, whose boat was fitted with an engine of the type used in the plane which won the Schneider Trophy. She met, however, with an unfortunate accident and the Americans emerged victorious. We hold the speed record on land by a very substantial margin; we also hold the Schneider Trophy for the fastest travel by air, and I do not think it will be long before the present popularity of motor-boats results in our being able to claim that we are first on land, air and water.

THE MAN WHO SHOOK HIS HEAD

A TALE OF THE COURAGE CLUB •

By LAURENCE MEYNELL

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH INNS

•

ARJORIE STANMERE slipped her dressing-gown on to the sand and, clad in a very abbreviated bathing suit, walked straight into the Atlantic Ocean.

0

No getting wet gradually with Marjorie, no tentative stretchings out of feet and then little scamperings back before some extra big wave; no nonsense like that, the sea was her element, and she went into it joyfully. She was alone in her own pet cove on that rocky and treacherous coast almost midway between Dodman Point and the Nare Head, a bay celebrated even among Cornish bays for its dangers to the unwary bather. Marjorie was fully aware of the latent dangers, and fine swimmer though she was, she never ventured very far from land. It was early yet, it wanted an hour to breakfast-time, but the summer sun was already gathering strength and to the east the water was one long pool of bewildering gold.

Marjorie revelled in the coldness and the stinging salt of the waves.

"Hev!"

She did not hear the shout until the second time.

"Hey!"

Then she trod water and looked shorewards, rather indignantly at first, for the cove was her own peculiar discovery and she wanted no intruders.

She saw a young man waving from the shore.

"These yours?" he shouted, pointing to

the tiny heap of her dressing-gown, towels and shoes.

"What an idiot the man is" (she thought).
"Naturally they're mine. Whom else could they belong to?"

"Yes—of course," she shouted back; then she realised what had happened. Forgetful of the incoming tide, she had foolishly left her clothes too near the edge of the water

and in another few minutes they would have been swamped.

The young man bent down and gathered her things carefully together. "I'll move them back," he shouted, "out of——" The rest of his words were drowned by the wind, but Marjorie saw what he was doing, and in real gratitude shouted "Thanks." The young man carefully deposited her things at the head of a breakwater, out of danger, waved a cheerful good-bye and, turning tail, began to clamber up the cliffs to the path on ton

Marjorie returned his wave with a vigorous bare brown arm and admired his rapid progress up the steep cliff climb. Then she resumed her swim, and the medley of thoughts in her pretty head ran something as follows. "He must have been walking along the top, I suppose, and spied my things—jolly lucky he did too—o-ooh, that's a whopper (the Atlantic was playing with its pretty plaything in a lazily magnificent mood)—it would have been a bore if I'd lost them and had to go back to the house without—though it wouldn't have mattered much in this lonely part of the world—o-ooh

(a mouthful)—wonder what he was doing going to bathe somewhere perhaps, but where does he come from ?—rather a jolly voice—Heavens, there's a jelly-fish—well, I look like being late for breakfast at this rate -out you come, Marjorie Stanmere . . ."

And out she did come, a dripping berrybrown body, as lithe and lissom as a panther. She ran to her rescued clothes and then took a swift look round her cove. Its secrecy was inviolate again; no strange eyes were there to admire as she dried her brown limbs and sang happily the while to herself.

It was a mile and a quarter by road to Polpesco Court, but no more than a mile if you scrambled up the rocks, as Marjorie did, and cut across the wonderful Cornish

It was her customary way back from bathing and she expected to meet no one on it, so that she was astonished, when she climbed the stile at the end of the far field, to land in the road almost at the feet of a stranger.

She stopped short in the song she was singing and stared. The stranger couldn't take off his hat because he hadn't one on; his tousled half-dried brown hair showed what he had been doing. It was the young man who rescued clothes.

" Hallo," said Marjorie.

The young man smiled, a disarming sort

"I say," she went on, "it was jolly decent of you to run down and pull my things out of the way like that."

"Not a bit; I just happened to see them from the top of the cliff. I was walking along---"

"Looking for somewhere to bathe?"

" Yes----"

"Well, don't forget, I've bagged Smugglers; that's what we call the cove I was

Smugglers, c'est à moi."

The young man grinned again, accepting the fiat. "Right-o," he said. "I've staked my claim farther along the coast. I say, do you live round here?"

"Yes—why?"

"Can you tell me the way back to Mrs. Cressida's cottage?"

"The way to old Mother Cress-of course. Are you staying there?"

"Yes.

Just the vaguest hint of finality about the monosyllable stopped the girl from asking any more questions: she looked inquiringly at the young man for an instant and then gave him the directions required.

"Thanks awfully," he said; "sorry to have bothered you.

His final cheerful grin made Mariorie add to her last "good-bye": "Don't know if you play tennis; we try to up at Polpesco Court, and we're always glad of an extra man." She had turned and was walking breakfastwards again as he mixed up his thanks and promises to come.

Marjorie was like that, as self-possessed and calm a young person as you please, and then just at odd, seemingly unimportant, moments in her life suddenly nervous to the

verge of rudeness.

She decided that he certainly had a nice voice; something rather jolly and reassuring in it.

Put an active young man down in a lonely Cornish cottage; put near him two admirably kept tennis-courts; let the young man have an open invitation to try the said courts; moreover, let that invitation come from the prettiest girl he has seen; and it's no good trying to make a book on whether he will accept it or not.

Dick Rogers came to Polpesco Court in trepidation, but he staved in something like triumph, for he was out and away the best

tennis-player there.

He arrived just before tea-time on a hot August afternoon and was gratefully seized upon by Marjorie, who wanted an energetic partner and who introduced him to everybody as "the man who saved my dressinggown from the vasty deep." Thereupon he was allowed five minutes in which to swallow a cupful of extremely hot tea and immediately commandeered to play three consecutive and exhausting sets. He and his partners won them all; he liked the one in which he played with Marjorie best. Then there was a men's doubles to end up with, so that he didn't require much pressing when asked to stay for dinner.

During dinner he had time to sort people out a little. First there was Marjorie. Then the others: her mother, Mrs. Stanmere, a charmingly courteous little lady of the old school; Mr. Stanmere; a younger sister; and three officers of various ages and ranks who were using the Court as a convalescent hospital (you must remember that this was in 1917).

Conversation was boisterous and un-bookish, as one would expect it to be between two sprightly girls and three semi-invalids who wanted only to forget certain horrible realities; but, through natural human curiosity, it kept touching on the new-comer and raising questions about his sudden arrival at Mrs. Cressida's cottage, what he was doing there, and his acquaintance with military service. Questions which, though he answered them quickly enough, Dick seemed to find rather displeasing.

It was over port, when Mrs. Stanmere and her two daughters had left the room, that Dick got the inevitable direct question.

"Down here convalescing like the rest of us?" It was a Major in the Gunners speaking.

"Er-no, not exactly. I'm working."

"I see. But you've been mixed up in this lot, I suppose?" ("this lot" meant the khaki which the speaker wore, and all its horrible connotations).

" No."

The flat, uncompromising monosyllable produced such an angular silence that Dick followed it up half-heartedly with a further explanation in an effort to tone it down a little.

"Fact is, they haven't any use for me. Doctor said I wasn't particularly fit—heart

or something."

The Gunner Major helped himself to another glass of port; then he said, "Oh—bad luck"; then he turned and talked to someone else.

Dick took his leave early that night. Marjorie saw him to the door. She expostulated with him for going just when "Farmers'. Glory" was beginning to get exciting.

"But I must. I've got to work."

"Work? At this hour? Whatever can the man mean?"

"Oh, only a bit of writing. I find I doit best in the evening."

"Writing—this is most mysterious. What

sort of writing?"

Dick laughed. "Very bad, I'm afraid. But it's not so mysterious as all that; there are such things as books, you know, and they have to be written before they can be read."

In the triumphant dissecting, seized-your-secret voice of youth, Marjorie accused him:

"Mr. Rogers, you're an author."

Dick neither confirmed nor denied the impeachment; he merely grinned. "But you'll come and play tennis?" Marjorie asked anxiously. "I'm not going to let go of a perfectly good partner like you."

"I'll come," Dick said, "if I may. Good

night."

He read whether he might or not in the softening of two brown eyes. "Good night, Mr. Rogers—and, oh——"

"Yes?" Dick wheeled round in the drive

inquiringly.

"Oh, nothing—I was just wondering if you were going bathing to-morrow; but I suppose if you sit up half the night writing you won't feel like it. Good night."

But somehow his nocturnal activities didn't seem to interfere with Dick's zest for an early dip. Every morning he walked along the cliff path above Smugglers and waved to Marjorie, who waved back again from the water; every morning they walked back together over the sweet Cornish grass. Nothing like those early morning walks together; no time for Adventure like the Morning when the sun is making diamonds of the dew and the sea-wind catches like wine in your throat—Morning of Day, Morning of Youth, very Morning of Life itself. . . .

Later in the day they would often meet in the more prosaic circumstances of the tenniscourt; but even there, in the middle of a set, or at tea when surrounded by other people, their eyes would sometimes meet—meet and instantly look away again; and though no word was spoken, each knew the other's thoughts: what fun this morning was, what fun it will be to-morrow. . . .

But you could never get Dick to stay at Polpesco Court much after eight at night. His work claimed him then. This always made the Gunner Major indignant. "What nonsense!" he would cry when Marjorie came back into the room from seeing Dick off. "Ordinary people don't start work at night; they go to bed."

"Authors aren't ordinary."

"Rogers doesn't admit he's an author."

"He doesn't deny it—and anyway, he writes, so he must be."

"'Um; might do something more useful

than writing nowadays."

Whereupon Marjorie would invariably leave the room, delivering her final and staggering shot, "No nightcap for you, Major."

"My Gad," the poor Gunner would say, looking at the slammed door, "that girl

knows her own mind."

"Of course," he would go on presently, "the fellow seems all right, talks like a Sahib and so on; but—well, it is a bit queer, isn't it? Not a day more than twenty-five, and it isn't much good talking about a heart when he can play four sets of singles off the reel and beat us all. What do you say, Cousins?"

"Conchie, probably," his fellow-officer

replied; "not a bad judge either. I'm going to develop a conscience in the next war."

"'Um." The Major looked doubtful, hinting darker things. "There are some darned queer characters about the country nowadays," he said, "most unexpected people too; you've got to keep your eyes open, I tell you."

But, mysterious though it seemed to other and more practical people, Dick's statement was only literal truth. He went back to his cottage to work, and it was seldom earlier than two, often it was nearer four in the morning, when he gave a little sigh, gathered together the scraps of paper littered round him (odd material, one would have thought, for an author) and carefully locked them all up in a small steel box. His tiny cottage bedroom was lined with books; books whose titles, could Mrs. Cressida have read them. might considerably have astonished her: several were mathematical, there were three Bibles curiously marked in the margins, not a few were in German—an odd mixture. But good Cornish Mrs. Cressida couldn't read, a fact which Dicky had duly elicited before he took his lodging with her.

He kept his body fit by that early morning dip and the strenuous tennis at Polpesco Court; and at night, when all Cornwall was silent save for the sea, he brought to bear on his problems one of the keenest brains at its own particular work in all England. But two would strike, three and four, by the grandmother clock on the stairs, and he seemed to get no nearer a solution; always at the end, when his books were shut, his papers wearily gathered and carefully locked away, that little sigh of unachievement would escape him. . . .

"R ACE you to that cairn," Marjorie cried, setting off at once in an outrageously unfair start; but Dicky got there before her, tomboy though she was. He was panting a little but not unduly distressed—privily she wondered about that "heart" of his. . . .

"You ought not to walk so near the cliff

edge," he admonished.

She made a grimace at him. "Rot, old 'safety first'; eight stone ten won't make much difference to a Cornish cliff."

"Ten eight possibly," he corrected her. "O-uch, that hurt, you savage." She was pelting him with a handful of little stones.

"Meant to," she assured him, laughing heartlessly, "teach you better manners. I say, just look at Hensbarrow. Rather good, isn't it?"

Dick looked over his left shoulder to where, behind St. Austell town ten miles away, the blunt head of Hensbarrow Down was glorious in the morning sun. Looks like some saint in prayer (he thought), some grim old statue touched to ecstasy.

"Dick!" The shot-like cry sent a peewit wheeling away in indignant fright and

brought Dick round like a top.

"Oh!" he shouted. "Hang on!" He was across the ten paces separating them in three terrific strides. But he halted short of her. Even in that split second of time his mind had appreciated the situation. The cliff edge had crumbled away under the girl and already her feet had gone; nothing was visible but her frightened face and two hands horribly taut on the grass that gave them hardly sufficient hold. Six inches in front of her Dick saw a thing he dare not look at, a crack in the ground that was like an evil sardonic leer. Quick as lightning, he whipped the towel from round his neck, but before he threw it to her he spoke.

"Keep cool, Marjorie," he said slowly and distinctly; "there's heaps of hold in that turf for you. It's no good me coming nearer the edge; it overhangs, by the look of it, and we should only both go over. I'm going to throw you this towel, and as soon as I do you must let go with both your hands and grab

on to it-see?"

She nodded, even managing a ghost of a smile. "Buck up, though," she said.

He got the towel ready, knotting the end to help her grip. "You must grab it with both hands and hold on," he ordered. "I can easily manage your weight."

"Eight ten?" she gasped. Dick saw, or thought he saw, the timiest increase in that

terrible leer in the earth.

"Coming," he shouted, and threw the towel.

It seemed like five minutes, but it must have been considerably less than that number of seconds before the strain suddenly eased and he heard the cliff edge spatter away beneath her feet as she scrambled on to safe earth again. She was on her knees on the short Cornish turf, and somehow he found himself beside her.

"My God, darling, I thought you were gone."

" Dick . . ."

"All right, old girl, safe as houses now."

"You saved me . . ."

"Rot. I told you not to walk too near the edge, though, didn't I?"

"Beastly man, I knew you'd say 'told you so '. . . . What? I'm not."

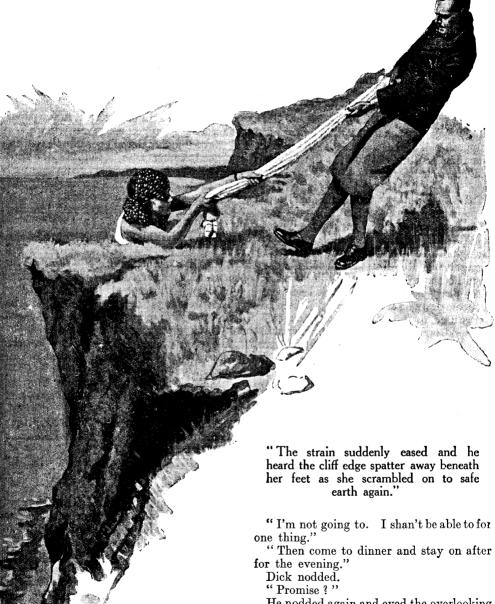
"Yes, you are; and here's a hanky."

"T-thanks—it's only sea-spray. . . ."

"I say, fancy all that happening before breakfast," she said.

"I shall have champagne for mine."

"Silly boy-Dick, don't work to-night."



"I'll kiss it away, then . . ." They walked together as far as the end of Polpesco drive.

He nodded again and eyed the overlooking windows of the lodge with disfavour.

"Lodge stiff with people, I suppose?" he said.

Marjorie shook her head. " No one there; he's away serving."

"Thank the Lord for patriotism," said Dick.

"That's the second, sir," she cried, disentangling herself with a fine show of independence. "I must fly now. Don't be late to-night."

She turned from half-way up the drive to wave to him and shout, "I've got your

hanky."

"And my heart," he answered, watching until the trees hid her slender grace; he was a happy man.

"'Morning, Miss Stanmere," the Gunner Major greeted her. "Had a good dip?"

"Topping, thanks."

"Gad, it gives you a colour, anyway."
Marjorie helped herself to coffee. "Oh, it's falling off cliffs that does that," she said.

Supposing that he was expected to, the Major laughed, but not for the life of him could he see any joke.

THAT afternoon Dick's little scraps of paper were very communicative—but in the wrong sort of way; their queer hieroglyphics spoke to him of nothing but two dancing brown eyes and two willing lips. . . .

Long before tea-time he put his work away in despair. "No good trying to work in Paradise," he reflected. "But I suppose one sobers down after a bit; one gets used to it, gets used to Paradise—a rum thought."

He was twenty minutes longer than usual getting ready to go to the Court. He arrived for dinner, sat opposite Marjorie, and found that she wouldn't look at him. And almost the only time she spoke to him was to rap out an unnecessarily sharp contradiction of some statement.

Lots to learn about women, poor Dick pondered over port. Then when they rejoined the girls in the drawing-room she gave him a cigarette, lit it herself, and

perched on the arm of his chair.

Bridge was suggested. Dick and Cousins cut against Marjorie and the Gunner Major. It was spasmodic bridge, carried bravely on in the teeth of a conversational gale. In fact, at one point an argument arose which threatened to stop the proceedings altogether.

"They won't draft reinforcements to the 83rd before autumn, not now they've gone

south," the Major said.

"They've drafted 'em already," Cousins

- "Nor can do; they haven't the transports."
 - "Stacks of transports."
- "Yes—most of 'em at the bottom of the sea—we've lost five this summer."

"Rot. I don't suppose we've lost one."

"Good gracious, Cousins, you must go about with your eyes and ears shut. I tell you at least five have gone down."

"And I don't believe one has."

"As a matter of fact, it's two," Dick said in an unguarded moment; "two since March."

The scornfully authoritative tone of his pronouncement had caused both wranglers, but especially the Gunner, to eye him in astonishment.

"And how the devil do you know?" the

Major asked.

"Eh? Oh, I dunno—read it in the paper somewhere, I suppose—two no trumps."

"News like that doesn't get into the paper, my good young man," the Major said, adding vindictively, "double two no trumps."

Dick got three tricks, which gave him game

and rubber; the Major scowled.

"Well, I must be off," Dick said, jumping

Marjorie walked with him towards the door.

"You'll come to-morrow afternoon for the American tournament?" she asked. "Rather—I'm looking forward to it."

They were in the hall by now, and when the door was safely shut behind them the girl stood away from him and said, "Dick."

The voice warned him—perhaps it even gave him some dim warning of what he was soon to face. "Hallo."

"Dick, when I go back in there, they are going to say horrid things about you—you know that, don't you?"

"I imagine the Major isn't bursting with love for me, but I can't say it worries me a lot. Is that all?"

"No. Dick, is your heart really bad?"

"You've knocked it about pretty badly, dear."

"No; seriously, please. Cousins says you're a conscientious objector, and the two of them make bets on how many white feathers you've had given you."

Just for an instant Dick's hand tightened on the hat he was idly holding, then it relaxed and there was the faintest shrug of his shoulders. "Oh, Cousins says that, does he? Well, there are a few odd million fools fighting for freedom, so I suppose we mustn't deny a man the right of free speech."

"You forget my brother is among the

fools."

"I'm sorry, Marjorie—but can't you see that sort of thing hurts?"

"It does; it hurts me." She slid those

capable hands over his shoulders, round his neck, drew his puzzled, resentful, not unhandsome face towards her own. "Dick, I know it's all right. I trust you. I know there's only one little word wanted to explain the whole thing. Can't you trust me? Can't you give me that one word? I'll pay you for it, Dick."

The boy was so close to those lips which could give him all the payment he desired that, for an instant, he hesitated, then he looked away and formed the dull words, "I've told you once, old girl, I've been turned down on medical grounds."

"That's the only reason?" Already her hands were relaxing their grip.

"That's it."

"Good night, Dick."

"Good night, my dear"—the lips he kissed were unresponsive.

All the way back to his cottage Dick struck savagely with his stick at the wayside grass. What sort of a jest was this game of life (he wondered) where you were lifted up to Heaven before breakfast and held sizzling in Purgatory after dinner the same day? . . . He must see it from her point of view; of course it was hard for her . . . curse that interfering fool of a major . . . but then it was hard for him, doubly so, and she couldn't see his point of view because he wasn't allowed to show it her. . . .

She loves you (some chance good angel whispered), it will be all right in the end . . . Dick wondered.

Mrs. Cressida was waiting up for him when he got back, an unusual event, prompted by the yet more unusual one of a telegram arriving. "Oh, sir, I do 'ope as it isn't nothing untimely," the dear old lady said.

Dick tore open the flimsy and read it. "Only about some books," he reassured

her.

"Oh, more books—well, I never did. . . ."
The telegram was, apparently, about books; it read:

"Books being despatched twelve noon

to-morrow passenger train."

Dick didn't have to reach down any of his curious volumes to get the meaning of that message; it was in the commonest code used in his game, just good enough to pass unsuspected in country parts.

"That squashes tennis to-morrow," he reflected ruefully, sitting down at his desk. "Wonder what sort of excuse I'd better

make . . ." He took up a sheet of writingpaper and after awkward thought scribbled a few lines. A few minutes before twelve next day Dick walked into a tiny café in a small back street of Truro and made for a table where two men were already seated. The one who greeted him first was short, inclined to stoutness, ruddy-faced, something like a retired sea captain. If asked to guess what job he filled you would have mentioned many before hitting on the right one—one of the most confidential and highly salaried posts at Scotland Yard. At first Dick did not recognise the other man, whose face was half hidden by the upturned collar of his

The little stout man ordered three coffees, and as soon as the waitress was out of earshot, asked, "Any luck, Dick?"

Dick shook his head. "Fifty false scents, but nothing in the end. Believe you've got

me on a wild-goose chase."

The short man shook his head emphatically. "No. That's where all the information's going. There's a code of some sort in those letters, and if only we could find it we could stop the leakage."

The third man spoke for the first time. "Can't you simply arrest the man writing these letters? Any pretence would do; if necessary, I guarantee to get an Order in

Council for it."

"No, sir," the man from Scotland Yard answered promptly, "last thing we want to do. That would only silence the man we know to be a danger; we want to find out who his helpers are, his sources of information, and we can only do that if Rogers here can solve his code. Dick, you know this gentleman, of course?"

"I don't think I——" The third man moved slightly and uncovered his features. Dick gave a start; it was a face better known in Downing Street than anywhere else.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Henry——' he said.

The great man smiled, a wan smile in a tired face; then he spoke in a low musical voice, very quickly, with long pauses between sentences.

"Our energetic friend here has brought me all this way to impress you with the importance of the work you are doing." (Long pause.) "My dear Rogers, I can't be more impressive than bald facts." (Long pause.) "If we go on losing food ships at the present rate, and no faster, we shall be starving in six months. It may seem callous to say it, but this country is bleeding to death, not in France, but on the high seas. Yesterday I gave orders for a complete

census to be taken throughout the kingdom of all animals, all edible animals: horses, donkeys, goats, dogs—we are as near rock-bottom as that. The man who helps in any way to prevent the torpedoing of food-ships is more use to the country to-day than a battalion of infantry. I'm not pessimistic, only truthful, when I tell you that at the present moment we are losing the war fast." (Long pause.) "And now I must hurry back; you'll do your best for us, Rogers, I know. The car is ready, Chambers, I suppose?"
"Yes, sir," the man from the Yard said.

"Yes, sir," the man from the Yard said.

"Just let me have five minutes with Rogers,

though."

The great man nodded, rose, bowed to them both, and walked swiftly through the little shop to his waiting car.

Dick sat listening.

"... here's the latest batch of letters. It's no good telling me there's nothing in 'em, Dick, because there is. I know it. The code has beaten me, beaten us all at the Yard, I admit that; but it's there, I know. And you mustn't let it beat you. We're not going to add this to the five known codes in the world that have baffled everybody—we can't afford to. Well, you heard what Sir Henry said? I want it in a week, Dick, if it drives you mad."

Dick sat staring at the fresh bundle of letters in a handwriting he knew most miserably well; the short man had risen and was preparing to follow Sir Henry. "Got to be back in the Yard by tea-time," he said.

"There's just one thing-" Dick began.

" Yes?"

"Can I—would it be possible—I mean can't I give people—one person—just a hint

of what I'm doing?"

"Not a ghostly shadow of a hint, my son. I wouldn't care to be responsible for your life if certain people knew; and though you may not care much what happens to your head, I do. You can have any disease on the list; trench feet, cold feet, malaria, malingering, any or all of 'em, but keep quieter than death about anything else. Why not develop a heart?"

"I have," said Dicky miserably.

"Well, that ought to do for you—so long. A week, remember, and that's your limit."

DICK got back to his cottage by the casual cross-country 'bus in time for tea. No good going for tennis now; he would walk over to the Court after dinner. Mustn't let this Code business rattle him; his best hours

for working were from ten at night till any old time—four usually—in the morning. And if a man is to keep his mind on edge for that length of time he must give it a rest during the day: walk, bathe, eat, laugh—be an animal, anything so that he keep his intellect from going round and round in that dreaded treadmill of pitiless investigation.

A T Polpesco Court he found himself in better favour with Marjorie than he had anticipated. She was sorry about the tournament, but she seemed quite satisfied with his excuse; if he couldn't come, he couldn't, and there was an end of it.

"Business," Dick explained vaguely.

"Bad luck," she sympathised. "Can't be helped, though; and I didn't have such a dud partner after all. Come into the drawing-room and have some coffee, Dick."

They entered the drawing-room to find a violent discussion in progress. It had started with that hardy perennial among regimental officers, the iniquity of the Staff; then it veered off to the unjust distribution of honours; thence, by way of the V.C., it came to the consideration of courage in general. Then Cousins trotted out his favourite theory. Cousins was married and had two young children. "If there's any dirty work going on," said Cousins, "the unmarried fellow ought to stick his head out to see what it is before the married man does."

"'Im and 'Er and It," the Major quoted scoffingly.

"Well, laugh at Kipling as much as you

like, but it's true."

"What, that considerations of private life should influence a soldier?"

"Certainly—when all the nation is soldier-

ing."

"Here, Rogers, you're a civvy, so you'll have an impartial mind. What do you say to that?"

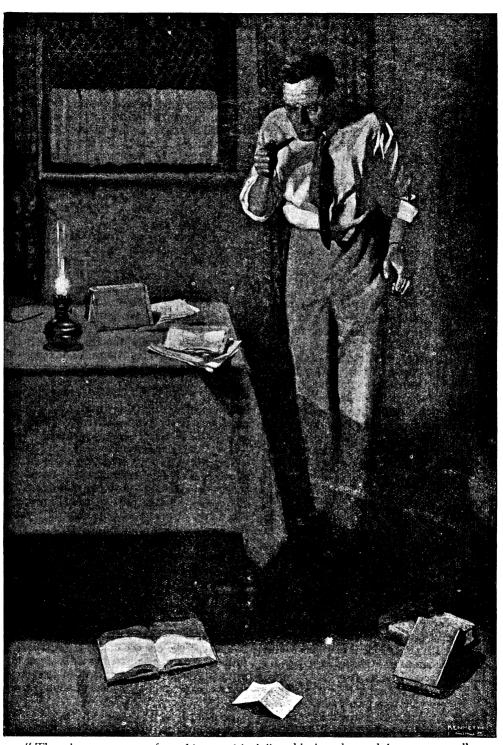
Dick took a seat and said he thought war was pretty tough luck on anybody, married or not.

"Note the true civilian cautiousness of expression," said the Major. "But put it another way, Cousins. 'Spose in the middle of Piccadilly you saw an old fellow stepping out in front of a 'bus, you'd have a shot at saving him without running home first to ask the wife if you could?"

"Probably-but I shouldn't have time

then to think it out."

"Well, take another instance where you would. You know how dangerous the



"The pipe came away from his astonished lips, his jaw dropped in amazement."

bathing is here, especially at high tide, if there's any sea on. You see somebody in difficulties: you are the only person there to help: the chances are against you coming out if you have a shot at it, but you're not going to stand by and see that person drown?"

"And if we both of us drown, what

happens to my widow?"

What do you say, Rogers? You're not married, or engaged, or anything silly

yet, are you?"

"No," said Dicky, without glancing at Marjorie. "My view is that probably all of us would feel different if confronted by the actual circumstances. I doubt if any man would ever feel tied so strongly that he couldn't go to help someone he saw drowning."

"No decent girl would speak to a man

who did," Marjorie put it.

"There you are, Cousins," said the Major; "that squashes you. You old fraud, you don't mean a word you say; you remind me of that fellow on the Poperinghe road—you remember him, the man in the Rifles——"

A typical flood of the Major's reminiscence followed. Dick endured the tossing on the seas of conversational boredom as long as he could, then he took his leave.

The Major and Cousins hardly noticed him go. Marjorie came to the door with him. "Good night, Dick," she whispered.

"Sorry for being a brute to you last night."
He put his grateful arms round her and kissed her good night.

FOUR hours later Dick sat in his small room bent over the littered table. worked by oil-lamp, and at that hour there was hardly a light burning in Cornwall but his own. His table was deep in letters, all tabulated and dated, all written in the same business-like neat hand, with its methodical punctuation; and all, apparently, harmless. He could not move his feet without disturbing some of the unusual books that lay about the floor-Krontz on "Frequency Tables"; Lister's Ciphers and the Bible; Manning's monumental Construction of Codes -all the expected, and many unexpected, stand-bys of the expert solver were there. But Dick was past the help of books now; if this code were going to be solved, the solving had to come out of his own head-that overworked aching head in which figures and symbols and combinations went whirling round in an unending nightmare.

Wearily he got up from the table and started to fill a favourite pipe. He wondered if Chambers was right about the letters... what a frost if he weren't... still, he always was right about that sort of thing, seemed to have a flair about it somehow. And yet, what could the Code be? What was there he hadn't tried? He began to pace regularly up and down. It was all very well (he reflected) to say that whatever the mind of one man can construct, the mind of another can analyse. In theory, yes; in practice, no. Anyway, not for years and years, and he had a limit of a week.

The wind of his walking disturbed one of the letters on the table; it fluttered to the floor, and Dick stood staring at it as it lay

there upside down.

The pipe came away from his astonished lips, his jaw dropped in amazement. "Good Heaven," he cried. What is it Chesterton rightly says about a man who has looked at a thing ninety-nine times being in grave danger of seeing it for the first? And what of the thing you have handled, pondered, turned over, worried at, despaired of, dreamed about nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and then at the ten thousandth see suddenly revealed in ludicrous simplicity?

"Good Heaven," Dick cried, his pipe in mid-air; then, pipe flung away, he was on his knees over that incredible piece of paper, with "Good—Lord; good—blessed

Lord," very quietly repeated.

The thing was as evident as the hind-quarters of an elephant; it was too evident surely to be true. Another false scent? He was quick with proving pencil on some odd scrap of paper—no, he was all right; good Lord, what wicked simplicity . . . yes, it worked out . . . all in the punctuation—and he had suspected those well-made stops and commas a dozen times before yet never seen this little dodge . . . some brain, that thought that out . . .

He kicked the useless Krontz out of the way and squatted down on the floor. With fingers that could not write quickly enough he plucked the essence out of the first letter to hand. It was as exciting as being a kid again and pulling the surplus packing away to reveal the thrilling outline of an unknown

present inside.

An hour later he picked up his discarded pipe and relit it. He yawned and stretched in great content—enough for one night the miracles thereof. Very carefully, he got together all his triumphant scribblings and

burnt them. Dick knew the rules of the Game all right—no more outside your head than need be; and all he wanted was in his head now. He could go straight up to Scotland Yard to-morrow and give Chambers the surprise of his life. That was an evening's work if you like . . . bed now and well earned . . .

With good Mrs. Cressida, but told her to keep his rooms for him. Dick had visions of coming back to the cottage for reasons other than work. Then he packed and looked out a lunch-time train, intending to stroll over to Polpesco Court in the morning and say "Au revoir."

The spell of good weather had broken and it was a blustery unkind day, but Dick cared nothing about the wind; he walked along the cliff and took delight in seeing the waves white anger by the westerly

It was an egotistical turn of thought (perhaps pardonably so), but he could not help reflecting how queer it was that there, walking solitarily along the Cornish cliffs, should be the one man in England who at the moment counted most. What was inside his head (and his head only in England) was the knowledge that Sir Henry had said was worth more than a battalion of infantry. And it was in his head all right (Dick smiled at any suggestion of doubt); why, he could have told you the clue backwards and blind-One advantage of looking at a thing for seven weeks on end without recognising it is that when you do see it, you see it unforgettably. . . .

The peewits wheeled above him, shricking their mournful complaint against the wind; then suddenly from the cliff edge rang out

an urgent human note.

Dick turned, startled. A fisher-girl of fifteen or sixteen was running towards him, but the wind made her words as unmanageable as her clothes. Still, tragedy needs no set phrases; it makes itself felt without formal introductions. Dick saw there was something amiss and ran to meet the girl.

Together they stood at the cliff edge; his ears were puzzled by her incoherent words, but his eyes told him all that was necessary. In the water that seethed blackly between the upright needle rocks was a pathetic little bundle; a tiny splash of helpless colour in the angry sea.

Together Dick and the girl, who tugged his arm, scrambled down the steep path to the water's edge, and Dick had his coat half off before he realised what he was doing.

It was high tide in a bay notorious even on that dangerous coast. The heavy sea and the rocks . . . in sudden immobility he stared fascinated at that hopeless little blob . . . ought he to go . . . Good God, he couldn't let the child drown. He might try it; if he could work his way in the lee of that big rock it might not be so bad . . . But he never moved; some inexorable unanswerable thing in his head told him that he could not go . . . the logic of the thing paralysed him: the life of a fisher-child or risk losing the knowledge that meant safety for England . . . he stood, stock-still, coat half off, staring helplessly to sea . . .

The girl at his side stirred him to realities; she was drumming with clenched fists at his side, almost frantic with wild grief.

"Jenny, master, you're going for our

Jenny . . . ? "

Even then Dick had some inkling of how the rest of the world—his own world—would endorse that passionate plea; but he shook his head. The girl hung on his arm, repeating her words, unwilling to believe his refusal. He stared down at her curiously as though she were part of some stupid, unwished-for dream imposed upon him. He realised how indefensible his inaction was; if he daren't plunge in himself, at least he could bring help. He turned and ran wildly inland.

It was a desperate scramble to the cliff top, with the traitorous grass giving in his hands and the betraying stones scattering away beneath his feet; but he gained the top at last and ran full tilt into somebody—the Gunner Major out for a constitutional.

The Major was a trifle surprised by this unexpected apparition; he was more surprised by the apparition's words:

"Here, Major, for God's sake lend a hand. There's a kid drowning down there . . . quick as you can, she must be pretty well done . . . I'll run to the coastguard's cottage . . ."

Five minutes had elapsed since Dick had been startled by that first cry for help; less than another five and he was hammering on the door of the coastguard's whitewashed cottage. Ready help was there, but Dick did not accompany it. He could not go back to that bare sand and those ugly rocks, still echoing, he tortured himself to think, with the unstemmable grief of the sister he had not dared to help.

Very quickly, now that the confusion of



the first few minutes had passed, was he coming to realise what he had done, what he had been forced to do.

He sat on a horsehair sofa in the scrubbed parlour and lit a cigarette; the good woman of the house brought him a nip of brandy. "Fair come over," she thought he was. He thanked her but did not touch the brandy; after an undecided moment or two she left him smoking slowly and staring at a

picture of Highland Cattle in Snow. Once, when he remembered the conversation of the evening before and thought of the irony of things, he laughed—a constricted sort of laugh; the good woman, busy about household things in the kitchen, jerked her head up when she heard it and wished her man were with her.

The Major stood in the lounge at Polpesco



"Cousins lowered his paper for a moment to have a good view of the man who could make such an extraordinary statement."

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Court, an ever-widening pool of water forming round his feet. He was telling his tale in the sub-heroics proper to his position.

"... the kid was half clinging on to a bit of rock and half washed off it ... I wasn't much good; it was the coastguard fellow with ropes and things who saved us; no end of a stout fellow. But what beat me was the Rogers man . . ."

"What about the Rogers man?" Marjorie was standing at the doorway, listening.

"You there, Miss Stanmere? Oh—nothing much . . . I think it was an error of judgment, though, to run a mile to get help instead of going in himself straightway——"

"Do you mean that Dick saw the child drowning and didn't go to help her?"

"I didn't actually hear him refuse, of course . . ." the Major stammered.

"Perhaps his heart wouldn't stand it," Cousins said, looking up from his paper for the first time. "Go away, Major, and put some decent clothes on; you'll get into a row from Miss Stanmere if you stand there making a mess of the floor."

But Miss Stanmere was worrying over things other than the lounge floor. Two rather stupid, obvious men these, she thought; as quick-judging and as cruel as schoolboys—and yet, and yet...and

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m yet}$. .

The door opened and Dick walked in, white. His entry produced a noticeable silence. The Major, good fellow, who really wished no harm to anyone, blundered in with a well-meant stupidity. "Hallo, Rogers," he said. "Jolly cute of you to dash along for the coastguard. We should have been done without—"

Dick cut him short with, "What hap-

pened? Is the child drowned?"

"Lord, no. She'll be as right as anything when they get the Atlantic Ocean out of her---"

"You saved her?"

"Rather not; the coastguard fellow saved us both. Just what I say, jolly smart of you to——"

"Dick, why on earth didn't you go to

help her !

The Major tried to help with, "P'raps Rogers didn't realise the trouble the kid was in at first."

"Of course I realised it," Dick said testily.
"I'm not a fool. Didn't I tell you the first second I saw you that she was drowning?"

"Then why ever didn't you go to help instead of running away?" Marjorie still wanted her question answered. "You know how dangerous those coves are, especially at high tide."

"Exactly."

"I-I don't think I quite follow you."

"I'm sorry," Dick said in the cold extravagance of exasperation. "I thought I was expressing myself pretty plainly. It was just because I realised the danger that I didn't go in; the danger was too great."

Cousins lowered his paper for a moment to have a good view of the man who could make such an extraordinary statement.

"Dick! You can't know what you are

saying."

"I do—only too well. It's a question of values. I happened to think—logically, I was forced to think that my life was more important at the moment than that of a fisher-girl. That's why I daren't risk it."

Cousins put up his paper again; the Major walked to the window and lit the cigarette of ostentatious aloofness; Dick made an awkward exit. Marjorie followed him into the hall.

"Dick."

He turned and faced her.

"Is that all the explanation you are going to give?"

"It is all the explanation I can give."

"That you ran for help because you were afraid?"

His face was against the light, so that she could not see how the colour mounted to his cheeks for an instant.

"Surely," she pleaded, "there is some other reason, something that will explain it, Dick?"

For a moment the boy stood motionless;

then he slowly shook his head.

The second time within an hour that he had shaken his head; and I often wonder which decision was harder to come to: to shake his head when that frantic thing, half wild in her grief, was begging him to help her sister; or to do it in the quiet of Polpesco Court with a full knowledge of what it was costing him. But he was under orders as clear and as binding as any which hold a soldier to his duty. So he shook his head.

The girl's mouth set in arrogant disdain, her brown eyes hardened with all the intolerance of youth.

"Some day perhaps you will understand

better, Marjorie," Dick said.

"I think I understand well enough," she said. "Good-bye."

Dick Rogers turned and went. He was dismissed.

Late that same evening he stood in a small untidy room somewhere in the maze of New Scotland Yard. A short ruddy-faced man sat at the paper-strewn table. "Well?" he asked, glancing up.

Dick threw a packet down. "Decodes," he said laconically. "You were quite

right."

The seated man's fingers were feverish among that thick wad of papers. It was almost indecent to see what Dick had laid bare in those seemingly innocent letters, like looking at a man's inside on the dissecting table.

Chambers was running through them with little exclamations of astonishment and

delight.

"... good Lord, he's in it ... and that girl at the 'Rodney'... by Gad, you don't mean to say ... oh, Abraham's holy aunt, what a haul! Dick, you're a blessed and unusual genius—Sir Henry will give you anything you want for this, a knighthood if you like."

Dick smiled faintly.

"I say, you're looking a bit done up, you know. I expected you sweated blood over this."

"I sweated blood all right," Dick assured him, "and now I'm going to have a holiday."

"Good."

"A real holiday. I'm sick of your cyphers and secrets, Chambers; to-morrow morning at ten o'clock sharp I shall stand naked in front of the recruiting sergeant and astonish him by saying I'm fit and the sooner I get to France the better I shall like it. And you can't stop me."

"Mad as a hatter," Chambers said, looking thoughtfully at the slammed door; "off his little rocker. Pity, but can't be helped, and after all it doesn't matter much, he has done what we wanted him to. . . ."

Once more he bent delighted over his treasure.

PRENDERGAST, the little lawyer who was telling this tale at the Courage Club, was silent for so long that we all thought he had finished.

"And that's that, I suppose," St. Marnier,

the soldier, asked.

"No," said Prendergast, "it's not quite the end yet. Dick was as good as his word and joined up in the ranks next day. In six weeks he was in France, and there he went to infinite trouble in his efforts to get killed—"" "Young ass," St. Marnier growled.

Prendergast agreed. "The boy had a theory, you see," he explained gently, "that it might help a little if he got a decoration—a V.C. for instance; but of course he didn't get one, he only got reported missing.

"Now before Dick went abroad he handed a sealed letter to his father with instructions that if he were killed it was to be opened. In the worst days of '17' reported missing' was bad enough to warrant assumptions. So his father opened the letter, and, reading it, felt rather sorry for the boy. Moreover, being a man concerned with the law, the injustice of the thing dismayed him. He did a certain amount of judicious wire-pulling, and as a result stood just after breakfast one raw October morning in the dingy morning-room of a very celebrated house.

"The father began to explain the situation to the great man. The great man—the Sir Henry of this tale—was sympathetic; among the wellnigh crushing cares of his great office he genuinely cared that young

Dick Rogers should be missing.

"'Of course,' he said gently, 'I am most distressed, most distressed. Naturally I will do anything I can—but—er—what was it—

er—exactly——?

"The father explained a little further. Sir Henry listened with eyes shut and fingertips joined. Then, when it was finished, he rang the bell for his secretary. 'Miss Stanmere shall know the facts,' he said.

"The father thanked him and went away a happy man. I know he was happy, because I was that father——"

"You?" St. Marnier asked.

"Yes; I changed the names a bit so that you wouldn't feel it too personal, but it's true."

"But your boy—surely—"

"No. Dick wasn't killed. He was genuinely missing, and turned up again with nothing worse than a bad flesh-wound, rather ludicrously in the rump. He was also reprimanded—not that he minded that much.

"His second visitor in hospital did more to cure him than all the doctors in the world. I can see her now coming along the ward with all the anxiety, all the love possible, burning in eyes from which intolerance and the harshness of youth had suddenly been washed away. She went on her knees beside his bed.

"'I—I—beg your pardon—Dick.'

"He stopped her lips from saying more."

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By J. J. BELL 0 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

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SYNOPSIS OF EARLIER CHAPTERS.

ADY BALLANTYRE, an attractive young widow, is in financial difficulties through speculating in "Flossies." She is hoping that her son, Steve, whose money she has also risked, will become engaged to Winifred Charters, who has £80,000 of her own. But during a cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Ailsa Maclean, and he is arranging another trip in the *Miranda* during the following August. Luis, a young Spaniard whom Flora had "mothered" in boyhood, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father's papers had made

Lady Ballantyre, secretly ashamed, gets Luis to sell pictures and heirlooms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parchment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory. Lady Ballantyre sees in a successful search the possi-

bility of restoring her fortunes.

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At Tobermory, Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the Miranda party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa. About the same time, Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, arrives unexpectedly at Tobermory, and a strange motor-launch appears in the bay to land a mysterious foreigner, who gives the name of M. François Dracquier. Luis begins to suspect that his secretary in Spain is taking a hand in the game.

After a dinner-party in the Miranda, Hector Maclean dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis immediately brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it. He is a canny Scotsman and will not be disturbing the new floor on so doubtful a quest, for "what would the people of Tobermory think?"

Luis discovers beyond doubt that his secretary in Spain has been tampering with Lady Ballantyre's letters. Possibly Munez has already informed the Church authorities of the impending treasure hunt, and the persuasion of Hector Maclean will be but the first of a series of difficulties. Meanwhile Luis,

though deeply in love with Lady Ballantyre, has conceived a genuine regard for Ailsa Maclean.

Maclean eventually agrees to uncover the well, giving out as pretext that he has hopes of establishing a "sodda-water" factory. He and Ronald "will be keeping two eyes on every bit of stuff brought up. If the jewels are found he will claim fifty per cent of the proceeds on Ailsa's behalf, Luis and Lady Ballan-

tyre can keep the remainder. Meanwhile, to divert suspicion, the *Miranda* is to continue her cruise. Father Macdonald is much puzzled by the presence of M. Dracquier, especially when he discovers that he is sending telegrams to Spain and hanging about in Hector's garden at dusk. The Father is, however, summoned by telegram to attend a dying patient in the Outer Isles.

XVII.

IN the night the weather broke; by morning a wet gale was blowing. The trip round Skye was abandoned, or, at any rate, postponed; and the Miranda remained at anchor in Gairloch. The rain fell without pause for forty-eight hours—not a long spell in those parts, but a dreary experience for people dependent for distraction on movement and changing scenes. Neither Lady Ballantyre nor her guests were so devoted to bridge that the game could enliven all their waking hours. Bridge failing, Steve went chatting with the captain, or any available

member of the ship's company, while in his absence Winifred played patience, or read a book, a slight frown coming and going between her exquisite brows. For a change, Luis and Ailsa had their music, while Lady Ballantyre, though not neglectful of her part as hostess, passed a good many hours in the privacy of her "office." "No escape from one's correspondence," she would remark, lightly enough, preparatory to going below; yet she sent few letters ashore.

Flora Ballantyre's spiritual state at this time may be described as "feverish." Besides the pains of suspense concerning the jewels, the stock-market virus was working again. Since her last purchase, "Flossies" had hung fire, falling and rising a few miserable pence. So little doing, her brokers did not trouble her with telegrams. She got "yesterday's prices" from the Glasgow Herald, which, excepting the night the Miranda lay at distant Harris, had arrived each evening with the mail. She spent hours in brooding over tiny figures that signified nothing to some people, but everything to others, to whom "+6d." meant joy, and " $-4\frac{1}{2}d$." dismay. Civilisation has refined many things, including folly.

She was thus engaged on the second night of the bad weather. Before dinner, she had handed the mate, about to go ashore to the post-office, a telegram instructing her brokers to buy a further two thousand "Flossies," and now she was asking herself, with all a gambler's fatuity, whether she had done right. She could not now have told herself why she had done it at all, adding to her perilously large commitments, and to her crime against the man who was trusting her with his whole possessions. It should be said that thus far she had dealt faithfully with the monies received by her bank from Spain. All had been set aside for the reduction of her secret debt to her son. Luis had done more than he had promised—some of the heirlooms had realised sums beyond his anticipations—and it looked as though Steve's patrimony might yet be fully restored. Yes, if nothing went wrong on the Stock Exchange! Even a moderate set-back in "Flossies" would force her to draw on the Spanish money. She strove not to think of that. She must have faith in "Flossies" to bring to her the salvation seen in her waking dreams, even if nothing came of the jewels. Yes, she must have faith-faith in so many parcels of shares, which she did not actually possess, their values lifted or lowered by astute persons, studying and working to gain her money and the monies of people like her!

She threw aside the paper and clasped her hands. No, she would not think of the danger; she would not—must not—think of Luis! Not yet, at any rate. Afterwards—when it was all over—when this war of sweet aspiration and sordid desire was finished, and she was at peace with herself—she would surely think of Luis, and be ready to give him—at last—anything—all that he wanted.
... But would Luis want anything? What if, after all, there was something more than friendliness between him and Ailsa, Ailsa with her freshness and frankness, her

pretty ignorance, not of the world, but of its more worldly ways? . . .

Of a sudden Lady Ballantyre got up and stood before the mirror. Her eyes searched their own blue depths and the fair, smooth beauty of her face. You and I, looking over her shoulder, might not have detected the tiny flaws; but she perceived them, and presently her hands rose to shut out the reflection. "Oh, you fool!" she whispered. "And you are destroying the only fine thing left to you as God made it!"

She went back to the table and sat there, chin on palms, staring—staring.

UPSTAIRS, in the saloon, Luis was tuning his violin.

Ailsa shook her head at the music he had placed before her—the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria."

"Why not?" he asked gravely. "We have played it before. Do you feel that it is —out of place?"

"No, no; not that. I do not know how to say it." Her voice fell to a murmur. "You—you play it like a Catholic, and I like—a Protestant. I mean—I have not the understanding."

"You have the sympathy—or I would not ask you to play it with me. There are no creeds in that music—only aspirations. Come!" He placed the violin under his chin. "Please!"

"Oh, very well; but you must know that sympathy is not enough," she said, putting her hands to the keys.

The quiet piano introduction just reached the ears of Lady Ballantyre; the first faint notes of the violin followed, scarcely audible; but she winced, as she would not have winced had the pair upstairs dashed into something bright and noisy. In their soft music she suspected sentiment, tenderness.

What were they playing?

She rose, opened the door an inch or two, and stood listening. Now she heard clearly enough. She was fond of music, as most of us are fond; once or twice in the course of her life music had really moved her. She knew the "Ave Maria." Often she had heard Luis play it—he used to play it when home on leave from France—and sensed its beauty. But never had she heard it played as now. A human heart, it seemed, was in the voice of the violin—a human heart, hurt beyond healing, sorrowful beyond comfort, because of human betrayal, appealing in its extremity to a compassion not of humanity. Ailsa went out of her thoughts. Luis, at

that moment, was as remote from the girl as from herself-she was sure of that. Now, in a measure, she understood what the jewels meant to Luis. Now she knew what she had done to him in taking advantage of his loyalty. Some day she might repay him his money. But how should she ever give him back the peace of his soul?

She closed the door, shot the bolt, and went back to her place at the table. She bowed her head on her arms and, even as a betrayer of a well-beloved, wept bitterly.

HER part finished, Ailsa got up, left the saloon and went quickly downstairs. Luis, kindness in his eyes, watched her disappear, sighed, and laid down the violin.

From her corner, looking up from the book, Winifred said quietly: "You and I, Señor, do not love each other; but if ever I feel like hating you, I will remember these

minutes on the Miranda."

He smiled slightly. "Then I hope you will never remember them," he said, offering his cigarette-case. "Not that I would wish you to forget the 'Ave Maria.' Its memory is a possession. I wonder how Gounod felt when he had written it down. I suppose the man who has made a million pounds feels that he has done something, but . . ." With a small gesture he appeared to dismiss the subject, and took a match from the holder on the table at his side.

"I am going to say something blunt," she said. "You played it so perfectly that I knew you were not making love to Miss Maclean."

His olive colour darkened. "How you see through one, Miss Charters!" he said,

giving her a light.

Under a rising whiff she regarded him without amusement. "And you see through me, Señor," she returned slowly. "Only you do not see everything. You do not see, for instance, that I am quite willing to be friends. . . . So I must take the risk of a snub." She held out her hand.

Luis, sensitive to kindness at all times, was, in his present sad humour, easily touched.

"Generous!" he murmured, with a warm

clasp.

The door of the deck-house slammed. Steve, in his streaming oil-skin coat, was looking into the saloon. His wet face was ruddy; his eyes were bright—brighter than his intelligence then. He was just a little stupid with the red wine he had drunk at dinner and the strong wind he had been facing in the bows. "Flirting with Winifred now!" The thought was excusable, but surely, in all the circumstances, the resentment accompanying it was unreasonable.

"Beast of a night," he remarked, "but the captain says we shall have a change of

wind before long."

He removed his coat and cap, hung them on a peg, and came in, drying his face.

"Others gone to bed?" he asked, ignoring

"Why, Steve," said Winifred, "it isn't ten o'clock!"

"Oh, isn't it?" He pressed an electric button in the panelling, dropped into a chair, and took a cigarette. Then, with an effort at graciousness, he turned to Luis.

"Been having some music? I was too far

away to hear."

"A little," answered Luis. "You would get a good song from the wind out there." "It makes a ghastly one over the funnel.

Play something now—won't you, Señor?" Luis went back to the piano and began to

play waltzes. The steward appeared.

"Whisky," said Steve.

A frown between her fine brows, Winifred turned her eyes back to her novel.

Steve smoked moodily till the steward, having set the spirit-tray on a table convenient to his hand, had retired; then seemed to rouse himself.

"What shall I give you, Señor?"

"Oh, anything," Luis replied over his

"For the Lord's sake," the younger man snapped in sudden irritation, "give it a name!"

"A spot of brandy, if you please," said Luis, playing smoothly.

"Well, why not say so?... Shall I put it on the piano for you?"

"Thanks." Luis hated the sight of a tumbler on a piano; it suggested a pothouse; but he recognised that Steve was, like himself, on edge. He made no comment on the excessive quantity of brandy that Steve had splashed in before the soda.

Steve was apologising to his other guest. "I beg your pardon, Winifred. Can I give

you something?"

"Nothing, thank you."

Luis glanced at the girl. Her voice had sounded almost prim. Primness and Winifred!

Steve helped himself to whisky, lavishly. Had Winifred not been present, Luis would have protested. He saw her veiled look, the tightening of her lips, and felt that but for his presence she would have spoken. But his concern was not for her. If Lady Ballantyre were to see her sen...

He turned his head. Lady Ballantyre had

arrived at the top of the stair.

Luis got up and went over to Steve, whose

hand was on the syphon.

"If you don't mind, old man," he said coolly, "I'll have whisky instead. Taken a dislike to the grape. Your Highland air, no doubt. But this "—taking up Steve's tumbler—" is a bit too stiff for me. Suppose we split it?" He poured half of the spirit into another glass. "Plenty of 'sodda,' if you please, Steve."

"Is this a carousal?" Lady Ballantyre was beside them. Her smile was weary.

"Blame me, or your demoralising weather," said Luis lightly. "Have you got your correspondence finished?"

She nodded. "Where is Ailsa?"

"I am here," answered the girl, entering. She had heard Lady Ballantyre leave her room, and had welcomed that as an excuse to herself for leaving hers. The little storm of emotion raised by the playing of Luis had passed. "I had some correspondence too," she said, with her head up.

Which was quite true. She had written to her father-" Dear Daddy, please wire for me to come home at once . . ."-and had torn up the letter—why, she could scarcely have told. She knew now that her feeling for Steve had been no more than a fancy, born in a romantic hour, nourished on absence, killed by exposure to the cold light of reason. The Señor, she assured herself, had had nothing to do with its death. She liked the Señor-liked him very much, considering the shortness of their acquaintance-and that was all. . . . Yet was it all? Of course it was! How could she fall in love with a—a Catholic? On the other hand, what could prevent her from doing It was only now that she had given a thought to Luis' religion. Well, well,impatient with herself-at any rate, she was not going to fall in love with any man who was in love with somebody else. . . . But was the Señor as fond as all that of Lady Ballantyre? More than once Ailsa had wondered. Now she wished she knew for certain. Not that it would really make any difference. Still—still, she was happy in his company, and not so happy away from itthat much she admitted. She must—dabbing her eyes with the cold sponge—be more careful of herself. . . .

UIS, having seen his hostess seated, took a sip, hoping she would not notice the glass on the piano before he found a chance to remove it, and asked whether anyone felt like bridge.

Steve, in that moment uncertain whether he loved or hated his friend, but remembering that he was host, expressed himself

ready for a rubber.

"If you don't mind, Lady Ballantyre," said Winifred, "I'd like to finish this book."

They played till near midnight, Steve, at times, stupidly. Winifred, watching, reflected that with all the whisky he had intended taking he would now have been making a fool of himself. Towards the end he was sleepy, inclined to be crusty.

Ailsa was the first to go downstairs. Winifred, passing Luis, who was putting away his violin, touched his sleeve and muttered, "You were a dear!"

Steve in perfunctory fashion

Steve, in perfunctory fashion, kissed his mother, and with a curt "good night" to Luis, took his departure.

There was silence till Lady Ballantyre remarked: "No news yet from Tobermory. Another day like this, tied up by the weather, with nothing to do but think, will finish me."

"No, no," he said gently. "You will wake up with renewed courage. The captain, Steve says, has promised us a change for the better."

"Whatever the weather, we must be at Portree to-morrow evening."

"You have ordered your correspondence to be directed there?"

"Yes; and we ought to be moving nearer home, in case of news—of the jewels." She got up. "Will you believe me, Luis, when I say that, were I to—to inherit a fortune, I should wish the jewels to lie wherever they are? For I know how you hate it all."

"Don't worry any more about that, Lady," he said quickly. "I give you my word that I ask for nothing better than a telegram from your cousin, with the word 'Found.'"

"Thank you. . . . But we have first to get one with the word 'Water.' . . . Now, I am going to bed." She moved towards the open door, halted, and then, with a slight movement, indicated the spirit-tray. "You are a good friend, Luis," she said huskily. "I saw what you did—and understood. Good night."

Luis had nothing to say. He followed her to the door.

At the head of the staircase she halted again. Her words were only audible.

"I wonder whether you have ever guessed at my chief reason for wanting Steve to marry a girl of character. . . . Well, now you know!" With her proud head bowed, she began to descend.

"You poor darling!" said Luis in his heart.

anchorage till the afternoon. By then, he prophesied, the swell would have abated, and a few hours' steaming through calmer conditions would bring them into Portree Bay towards dinner-time. He also suggested that the morning might be pleasantly



XVIII.

ITH the morning came sunshine; but there was still a "bit of a sea "in the Minch, and the captain, who took not delight in the discomfiture of landlubbers, advised Lady Ballantyre to let the Miranda remain at her

passed on shore, exploring one of the richest beauty spots of the West.

Thus it befell that Ailsa Maclean received an answer, full and final, to her inward question concerning the affections of Luis de Lara. The launch lay alongside. She and Winifred and Steve were already on board. Lady Ballantyre was descending the ladder, followed by the Señor. Suddenly, on the second last step, Lady Ballantyre stumbled, her hand lost its grip of the rail, and she looked like pitching into the green water between the launch and the yacht. But the mate standing on the grating was on the alert, and his great arm went out to save. It was all over in an instant. Lady Ballantyre was safely on board the launch, and everyone was smiling—everyone save Luis. Ailsa had spied his face at the critical moment, and it had told her all she needed to know.

Undoubtedly the swift thrust of the truth meant a stab to her young heart. Beautiful to have been loved by the gentle, dark-eyed Señor! Yet after the pang came resignation, followed by a sense of relief. After all, she did not love him—not, at least, in a way that hurt. And she was sorry, terribly sorry, for him. What a pity that he should be fated to care for a woman so much older than himself; how cruel that he should care in vain! For Ailsa was simple enough to imagine that Lady Ballantyre, woman of the world though she was, must, had she loved, have betrayed her feelings ere now.

All that morning Ailsa did her utmost to be "nice" to the Señor, and Lady Ballantyre, who walked with them, found more to wonder about anxiously than the jewels and her "Flossies." Steve was a dull, almost a sullen, companion, rebelliously aware that Winifred's presence was, like a faint fragrance, a solace to his senses, her unusually quiet, sympathetic talk an anodyne to his sore spirit and jangling nerves. Perhaps Winifred apprehended that she was nearer to winning then than ever she had been since the hour when the Miranda steamed out of Oban Bay; but she could scarcely have dreamed that her moment of victory was only a few hours away.

A T four o'clock, the yacht left her anchorage. The first half of the trip southwards was in the open, and it is pathetic to reflect that the most ardent of our desires, the loftiest of our ambitions, may be made to look foolish by a strictly moderate, but choppy, sea. Luis and Ailsa had the deck to themselves, even after the *Miranda* had reached the still waters in the lee of the Isle of Skye. Not till she was entering Portree's secure and lovely haven did the others appear, Lady Ballantyre and Winifred looking, it must be allowed, wonderfully little

the worse for wear, Steve none the better of the nips of cognac—that ancient delusion of the landlubber at sea—which he had taken in the course of the afternoon, not, one fears, for his stomach's sake only. Luis detected the frown between the brows of Winifred; also something he had never noted before—a sadness at her mouth.

Lady Ballantyre, taking his arm, led him

up the deck.

"Luis, what am I to do? I feel like telling the steward to put every bottle overboard."

"I know, Lady. But, of course, you cannot insult your son like that. I'd speak to Steve willingly, only I seem to have lost the right of friendship to do so. A word from me now would simply mean an explosion. You see that, don't you?"

She nodded and sighed. "What a mess

I've made of it all!"

"Don't say that! Steve is not really a—drinker—nothing like it. But he needs—help." Luis put his hand over hers. "Lady, I apologise. I take back what I once said about Miss Charters. You were wiser. . . . May it come to pass! I would do anything to bring it about."

"Are you saying that to comfort

me ? "

He smiled. "When did I ever say anything to do that? Have patience—courage. Before long we shall all be sailing away from Tobermory—for good. Then we shall all grow sane once more. At present your boy hates me more than he loves Miss Ailsa—I feel sure of that."

"You have certainly," she said slowly, "made great progress in your acquaint-

ance."

"Yes; it has surpassed my highest hopes. By the way, what about those little things

from the jeweller?"

"I expect they are waiting in the postoffice at Portree. It was the address I was most sure about when I wrote. I should have the parcel to-night. Do you now wish to present them to Ailsa yourself?"

"A thousand times, no! I have your

promise to oblige me."

"Very well—as you wish. . . . I wonder if there will be a message from Tobermory."

It always came back to that.

A T dinner Steve seemed to be restraining himself. He took no wine. But when the others left the table he lit a fresh cigarette, and lingered.

Lady Ballantyre went to her "office," the girls to their cabins to get wraps, for the breeze was a trifle chilly.

Luis, after a friendly "Coming up, Steve?" to which the younger man responded with a curt "Shortly," went on deck. Luis took out his ivory cutter. Something in him objected to the tearing of even a telegram envelope. The cutter, however, was scarcely required. At its touch the flap, carelessly sealed, opened. Luis read the message.



The mate had just come on board with newspapers and the mail, which included a registered packet. There were two telegrams, one of which he handed to Luis, with the remark, "That will be all for you, sir." He then passed into the deck-house, about to press a button to summon Lady Ballantyre's maid.

"Excuse me, sir," said the mate, returning, "but I think I've given you the wrong one."

"So you have," answered Luis. "I ought to have looked at the address." His hand shook slightly as he refolded and returned the message to its covering. He moistened his finger and made the flap

secure, and waved about the envelope, to give the fastening time to take hold, before exchanging it for the one addressed to himself.

The second message was of one word—" Water."

"Wait a moment! Let Lady Ballantyre

ening in the deepening dusk, but seeing nothing—nothing but the words of the first telegram—

"Bought 800 Flossies 19/9 and 1200 20/3. Now 22/6. Market strong.—Terry."

Bitterness! She had taken all he had to give, only to play with it. She had not



"She wheeled upon Steve. 'You wicked coward to betray your friend like that! Get out of my sight!"

have this one also," he said, replacing it in its envelope.

Left to himself, he leaned on the rail, apparently watching the shore lights bright-

lied to him, for she had made him no promise; none the less, she had deceived him by letting him believe that she was done with speculation. He was not angered: the

wound was too deep for that. "Lady, Lady, how could you!" If in the secret place of his heart there had lurked till now a hope of her love, this swift revelation had surely slain it.

Minutes passed; the dusk became darkness. Winifred, coming upstairs, saw the motionless figure in the shine from the deckhouse, and was about to hail. But an instinct bade her keep silent—there was now an odd sympathy between those two, who so lately had been almost at enmity—and she turned into the saloon, where she took up one of the newspapers, left there by the mate.

But Ailsa, arriving on deck, a minute later, knew no such inward prompting. She was joyously excited; there was eagerness in her glance, in her step, in her very breath. She stepped out quietly and laid a shy hand on Luis' arm.

With a start he turned, recognised the intruder, and smiled——

"Oh, Señor, why did you do it?" she asked softly, her lips reproachful, her eyes happy stars.

"But what have I done, Miss Ailsa?" She threw back her wrap, disclosing an aquamarine pendant hanging from a thread-like platinum chain on her breast, a slave bangle on her arm.

"Ah!" he said. "Charming!"

"Lady Ballantyre could not have known unless you were telling her. To no one but yourself did I ever confess my greediness."

"And why should not I give Lady Ballantyre a little hint when I guessed she was thinking of giving you a trinket or two? You are not angry with me, I hope?"

"Angry? No—though I am not knowing just what I am with you. You—you are a strange man, Señor—always doing things for other people. I guess that now! Somehow it makes me feel a wee bit sad—I cannot tell why. . . . But thank you, thank you!"

There was a pause. To Luis came the thought, how sweet to have a quick, warm heart like hers near to his own! The lone-liest moment of his life had not been that of a desolate little boy, all those years ago; it was now. His hands went out and—fell. The clasping of that rounded girlish form, the feel of that pretty arm to his lips, would not make him glad for an hour; nor yet forgetful for an instant. To one woman he had given his child's love, lad's love, man's love, and the last was a love that many waters could not quench. . . .

"But you are not admiring them, Señor!

Please to look at my pendant—the beautiful thing I never dreamed I would ever be wearing." She held it up for him to see.

Steve stepped from the deck-house. His gait was steady enough, but his sight was a little blurred, and his speech, when it came, was thick. His face was suffused. He drew near, halted with a jerk, stared for a space at Luis, then turned to the girl, and said:

"Before you accept his presents, Ailsa, you should ask him to tell you about the girl in the mountains of Spain and the man he

murdered there, two years ago."

Silence—silence that seemed far longer than it was. The wrap slipped from Ailsa's shoulders and fell on the deck. And then, in a flash, Luis had his hand on Steve's throat, had whirled him round, and was forcing him back, hard, against the rail.

"Señor . . . Señor . . ." The girl

moved to fling herself between.

But it was already all over. Luis let go, drew back, panting, white, and crossed himself.

"It is quite true, Miss Ailsa," he said presently, "that I murdered the man."

"It is nothing to me if you have murdered a hundred men," she said rather wildly. "I am very sure he was a bad one." She wheeled upon Steve. "You wicked coward to betray your friend like that! Get out of my sight!"

Steve's hand dropped from his aching throat. The madness had passed, leaving him spent. With neither sound nor sign, he moved away, not so steadily now, towards the stern, turned the corner of the deckhouse, and sank upon the seat in the shelter at its rear. And there, before long, Winifred, who had stolen from the deck-house by the other doorway, found him.

Luis picked up the wrap and replaced it on Ailsa's shoulders, and held it there, for her hands were at her face, saying: "Don't despise him, Miss Ailsa. He did not know what he was doing. Forgive me also. I should have told you, at the beginning, the sort of man I was. May I tell you now how it happened?"

She let fall her hands. "Yes, you may tell me."

When he had ended the short tale, she said: "It is very dreadful for you, but you only put some dirt out of the world. My own ancestors did far worse. See, I am offering you my hand."

He took it gratefully, without a word. "Does Lady Ballantyre know?" she

inquired, after a moment or two had

"No. . . . Why do you ask that?" She shook her head. "But I will ask another thing. What is wrong on this yacht? Why is nobody happy?"

Before he could think of a reply, Lady Ballantyre joined them. She, too, was excited, if not altogether happily so. Had the boom in "Flossies" begun, after all? Were they nearing the bottom of the well, and the truth about the jewels, at last?
"I was showing the Señor your lovely

presents. I must write at once and tell Daddy about them," Ailsa said, and made

her escape.

"Luis," said Lady Ballantyre, "why didn't you bring me the wire from Tobermory, instead of sending it by a servant?"

The question was not unexpected. thought it best to let it go by your maid. I could not be sure of finding you alone at the time," he answered, "and your cousin's message did not require explanation. . . . It was sent off before noon, so that probably they are working under, or, at least, in, the water by now."

"And the task may be finished quite soon

-to-morrow, perhaps?"

"Possibly. Depends on the depth of water." His tone was indifferent. "I suppose you are instructing your captain to resume the voyage south, to-morrow?"

"Yes. By to-morrow evening Hector will expect us to be waiting within an hour's sail of Tobermory. That was the arrangement. I have already spoken to the captain about-a safe anchorage, and he has suggested Loch Drumbuie-just within the mouth of Loch Sunart, which, he says, is one of the very loveliest spots in the West Highlands."

"That is, of course, an important point! The charm of nature means so much to us all

at present, does it not?"

"Luis, what is the matter?"

"Forgive me, Lady. I will tell you a secret. Miss Ailsa does not love me."

"You-you have asked her!" The blue eyes of Lady Ballantyre glinted in a ray

from one of the saloon windows.

"Cannot you give me credit for a less crude intelligence? They say that a woman always knows when a man loves her. Surely a man may sometimes guess when a woman loves him not. It is my belief that Miss Ailsa—who is a darling—has been quietly comparing Steve and me with that good and honest fellow, Ronald-much to our disadvantage. It is my expectation that your

Steve will go back to the girl of your choice. What more could you wish?"

"I could wish," she said sharply, "that you would be yourself, Luis. What is the matter?"

"I should not wonder if it is the need of a drink. Come! It is chilly here. Let us go into the saloon. Give me permission to ring for the steward and command Benedictine. so that you and I may drink to the fortune almost in our hands."

"As you will," she said. "But you are only telling me that you have some worrysome new worry, I suspect. Is there nothing

I can do?"

"Nothing, Lady."

THE only light giving on the shelter came from a skylight on the deck. In its dimness sat Steve, a crushed-looking figure, his face bowed in his hands He did not reply to the soft question of Winifred, who, in her fur coat, stood looking down on him with bright, pitiful eyes.

Lightly she laid her hand on his head. "Don't!" he muttered. "I'm not fit to be touched by you, or any decent person."

She sat down beside him. "I'm not sure that I'm a decent person, but I know I'm a practical one," she said quietly. "We are old friends, and I'd like to be of use to you. You've been having some trouble with the Señor. I was in the saloon, and though I did not hear enough of what was said to understand anything, I saw enough to gather that you and he had been near to fighting. I'm not asking what it was about. I don't care whether you were in the right or in the wrong. The only thing that matters to me is that you are suffering now. . . . Poor old Steve!"

She waited, but he neither moved nor spoke: only shivered slightly in his evening clothes.

"Poor old Steve!" she whispered again. "Don't shame me with your kindness," he said suddenly, hoarsely. "I've shamed myself more than enough. You know I'm not quite sober."

"I know you are enduring a dreadful

reaction-

"And that I'm craving for another

"No; I don't think you are. But"deliberately—"if you ask me, I will fetch you one."

He regarded her with something like horror. "Oh, never that, Winifred, never that!"

She nodded as though to herself, saying gently, "So, you see, you don't really want it. . . . But is there nothing else I might do for you?"

With a gesture of negation, he turned his face from her. "I've done a most abominable thing to-night—betrayed my best friend. I tell you, I'm not fit to be breathing the air with you. . . . Please, Winifred go!" He shivered again.

She got up. "Yes-you want to be alone now. But if, later, you want a friend, I'll be ready. And there's no sense in asking for a chill." She slipped off her coat and laid it over his shoulders, with its warmth of her body and her perfume. "But don't sit there too long. Good night, Steve. think I shall go to bed early." She took two steps.

He was on his feet, shaking, holding out

the fur.

"Don't go, Winifred! . . . Put it on again. . . . Don't leave me. . . . Sit down again—please! . . . You're the most beautiful thing in all the world, and I'm the ugliest. . . . If I tell you the truth, you will despise me for ever. But I must tell it." He was on his knees. "Listen, Winifred!"
"Tell me nothing, Steve. The past is

past." Her voice was all compassion. "Tell me nothing—nothing, except that

you-want me."

"Want you? God knows I want you!

I need you! Everything has gone wrong since I got out of touch with you, last year. I've been an utter fool, as well as a cad. . . . And to-night all that was vile and wicked in me came out. Oh, God, how could I do it? I'm not fit to---'

"Hush!" Her hand went out and pushed back the hair from his hot forehead. Her eyes, never so virginal, held and looked into his, tired, a little bloodshot, but sane enough. "Steve, do you really and truly want me?"

His face reflected a revelation. "I love you," he stammered; "I'm unworthy to say it—but I do love you, Winifred."

" Then . . ."

Her coat was open. Within glimmered her white neck and breast. . . . Sanctuary. His lips touched the whiteness. His cheek rested on it. After a while, under the fur, his arm went gropingly around her young lithe body. She drew the edges of her coat towards each other, as far as they would go, and kept them there, protectingly.

She sat very still. Perhaps there were tears in her eyes. Perhaps. But surely there was a smile, faint, secret, at her

Had she been acting? Had she won him by her sweet guile? . . . Does it matter, since, loving him in her oddly practical, almost dispassionate fashion, she was destined to be his salvation and his strength?

A further instalment of "Gambler's Hope" will appear in our next issue.

A REAL HOLIDAY.

KNOW the joys of Henley and the cricket thrills of Lord's, I've spent a bright week-end or two upon the Norfolk Broads. In Cowes Week with society I did my share of yachting, While on the lawns at Ascot I'd engaged in winner spotting. The Frinton tennis tournament, a river club at Bray, Have both of them assisted to pass the time away. The usual round of theatres with supper and a dance Has helped to stay that boredom which is only killed in France. For over there I've wandered from Deauville to Le Touquet Not to mention Monte Carlo and the coast of Paramé. All day upon the beach I've lounged with nightly hectic beanos From vingt-et-un to baccarat in fifty-one casinos. I've taken part in stunts which range from cleverness to crudity, I've seen the Paris fashions change from two-piece suits to nudity. I've taken tea with Duchesses, hobnobbed with High Society, That's both the aristocracy and nouveau-riche variety. You ask me how I've found the time and cash to cut such capers? I stayed at home and studied all the weekly picture papers.

MR. BUFFUM HAS AN ENCOUNTER WITH HYMEN

By HUGH DE SÉLINCOURT

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE (

R. BUFFUM was on the 'phone speaking to Niece Lucia. His face first beamed.

"Yes, dear, by all means, come." His face then fell.

"But . . . er . . . but . . . er . . ."
His lips moved soundlessly together.

A cheery "Out with it, Old Man!" assailed his ear. He swallowed and enunciated distinctly, as though to suppress any ribald comment: "My friend Mr. Wagstaffe and his daughter Patty will be spending Saturday with me."

"Would you rather I didn't come?" Niece was always so terribly direct.

"No, no!" said Mr. Buffum immediately. "Please come. Only . . ."

"Only what?"

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"You know quite well."

"Oh, I'll behave myself," she laughed.

"Now, you know that's not quite . . . not quite . . ."

"Oh, near as makes no matter, Old Man. 50 E

Till Friday."

Mr. Buffum accepted it as an indubitable fact that Mr. Wagstaffe, his late partner in business and his oldest and best friend, being all that Mr. Buffum was not, was on that account worthy of much respect. Niece Lucia, with her flippant sense of truth, declared him to be an infliction and the main cause of Uncle's early retirement from commercial circles.

They met at lunch on Saturday, and at lunch Niece Lucia concealed her feelings so well and behaved so beautifully that she won the loud approval of Mr. Wagstaffe and, alas! the confidence of his daughter: the last thing she desired. She heartily disliked Mr. Wagstaffe; his daughter . . . well, she ticked her off as girlish—a quality which should surely commend its owner, but didn't.

"She gasps and giggles. Oh, my dear, unspeakable . . . the clinging sort, bendy, puts on the weakling air, entwines and ingratiates and sticketh closer than a . . . " Here most naughtily yet most expressively she flicked with thumb and finger an imaginary something from her arm, shuddering.

It happened after lunch—in the drawingroom. Niece Lucia was fairly caught. She was thinking, "She reminds me of weed in a pond," when she found Patty Wagstaffe beside her, her arm in an affectionate clutch, and heard emitted between breathings of

"Oh, I do so like you, and I was so afraid of you, but not any more now. That dear Mr. Buffum . . . I must tell you. I know you'll help—but father is so ridiculous, and he's quite set his heart on me marrying him. You know what father is. He is so candid and impetuous: he says, 'I've always had to look after old Buffum; a good wife'd be the making of him, and you're the very one . . .' Isn't he too absurd!"

Niece Lucia sat slowly stiffening, more and more like wood. She was caught in clinging pond-weed: any moment she might be kissed. And she had quite thought girls like this had died out; were obsolete. They still existed. She was nonplussed. She sat mumchance: slowly stiffening; and her hard arm was being kneaded by coaxing fingers:

"Oh, you're surprised! Uncles always

seem so old, I know. And a girl like me!" Miss Wagstaffe cooed.

She was, in a way, hostess. The girl was her guest. You could not say to a "You disgusting little beast!" Possibly the thing had feelings of its own; there was no knowing. Just the little cringy sort that might inveigle itself . . .

The first shock passed. It was no good working oneself up. She firmly undid the clinging fingers and rose to her feet.

"I'm afraid that I'm a bad person to confide in," she said. "I never know what to say. You don't smoke. No? I will."

Straight and slim and taut she stood, rising on her toes by the mantelpiece. Whatever she said would be misunderstood by this treacherous little wisp of insincerity: and if she spoke directly enough to make any misunderstanding impossible, she would be unpardonably rude.

"Father's too awful for words. This visit he's going to make . . . it's only to give me the chance to what he calls fix it up before he picks me up on his way

It was odiously taken for granted that, being a woman, Lucia perfectly understood what would happen, that she recognised the ease with which it could be made to happen: and being a woman, alas! she did recognise it all too well. Uncle was such a chivalrous, darling old idiot: and the more she warned him, the more mulishly obstinate he would become.

Niece Lucia heard the Wedding March; saw the end of all good times with Uncle. It wasn't just selfishness, she furiously thought: this little beast couldn't appreciate a pet guinea-pig, let alone a man like Uncle. He'd be wretched. And, oh, so easily anyone could play on his feelings! What chance had he against two such designing ones?

She heard the men coming.

"I love long walks," she forced herself brightly to say. "I'll see you at tea," she beamed, and made her escape, leaving, she felt, poor Uncle to his fate.

She heard words of ill-omen in Wagstaffe's

loud voice:

"I've got to pay a sort of business visit in Angmering as I'm in the neighbourhood: you don't mind my leaving Patty with you, old chap? I'll call for her on the way back."

Such things boiled up in Niece Lucia to be said! The farther away she was, the better and the safer. A swift walk to the Downs

was indicated . . . fresh air and an open view. And on her return, prettily staged, to greet her at the hall door perhaps, she'd see Patty twined like pond-weed on Uncle's arm and hear her breathy gasp of a voice say, girlishly: "Oh, darling, what do you think, he's asked me to marry him and we're engaged!"

And she'll giggle . . . and I shall not be allowed to strangle her, offhand, forth-

with and at once."

She set off walking at a great pace, determined to reach the top of the Downs, as though her actual sanity depended upon the very top being reached. But she had not been walking more than seven minutes before she stopped quite suddenly and turned sharply round. Her behaviour was . quixotic.

Why should she leave the little wretch a clear field for her knavery? Her mere presence would suffice to thwart the horrid scheme. Of course, that kind of girl could only think she wanted to cling on to Uncle and his money. Her mind worked on those lines and on no others. And the scheme was too simple with an unsuspecting lamb like Uncle. The girl had only to sit on his knee -she could picture the scene! (and vividly did). "Oh, I can't help it! I do so love you. Father is so harsh and doesn't understand, and you are so gentle-oh, don't think me too bold and awful. Really." And she'd put her arm round his neck, her cheek against his. . . . "And I'm so lonely and no one to love me and be gentle to me like you and understand me like you. Oh, couldn't you give me one kiss?"

Niece Lucia stamped her foot to stop these horrid imaginings. They were not kind to a sister-woman: they were not flattering to Mr. Buffum: but for neither of these noble reasons did she stamp to stop them; she stamped to stop them because they were all too deadly true to be tolerable.

She walked resolutely back at an even faster pace than that at which she had started She slammed behind her the small gate that led through a little wood to the garden. She passed by the drawing-room window and looked in, as she walked past on the grass. The fire blazed. By the light of the fire she saw that she was too The mischief was done. In fifteen minutes! Incredible. It was too late. Fool to have gone out! Coward to have left him! There the egregious Patty was on his knee, her weed-like arms entwined around his neck. Too bad. Too bad. The little serpent.

Well, one thing was quite certain. She

she knew she could not bottle up. Poor Uncle would be certain, too, to think he was happy. She very nearly cried with



"Lucia made her sad way back to the house where she had enjoyed so many happy times."

could not be civil to them at tea: would not join in at all the gloating aftermath. No need to make matters worse by rudeness

vexation. And perhaps, people are after all so amazingly different, there might be happiness for him . . . That thought really did bring tears to her eyes . . . The little mean clinging thing . . . Life was too difficult.

She paced away in the opposite direction and decided to pay a surprise call, to clinch at any rate the tea affair, if her luck and the people were in. Both were. And for two good hours she escaped from the looming cloud of event, owing to the distraction of behaving in the home of comparative strangers. She entered its looming blackness, however, as she made her sad way back to the house where she had enjoyed so many happy times. With a new mistress all would be different.

No Buick stood on the drive. They were gone. What had been left behind? There was no wind. It was very still. The stillness seemed ominous. She was deeply fond of Uncle. She realised now how terribly she would miss all the easy delicious fun of their relationship—and with that snaky little creature always odiously there, what would be left of it? Some people spread a sort of poison in which all gladness and all niceness withered.

She softly opened the hall door and went in. The house was silent. What a dear place it was! She softly and sadly climbed the stairs to her room. She sat down limply on her bed, too depressed to take off her things. The right sort might make things happier and nicer! Perhaps she was hard and unkind to that loathsome little beast! Oh dear! If I've got to sort of smile with Uncle over his new-found joy! Old Idiot! Old Idd-dd-iot!

She heard him moving about in his study. She listened intently. She heard him humming. She heard a book dropped; or a hand clapped...or a knee smacked. She heard him whistling, whistling loud and whistling wrong notes. Onward, Christian soldiers. Curse it! He was in the seventh heaven. Fatuously got.

Well, as good first as last. May as well bite the bullet. Grasp the nettle. No good putting off the evil moment. She could say she was glad he was happy. So she was, of course, in a way. She must say she didn't very much like his sweet inamorata—yet, at any rate. That would be honest.

"SSSSS—wonderful! SSSSS—marvellous!" she bitterly hummed, as she tidied herself. Then pulled herself together and went into the study.

Mr. Buffum was radiant. There was a strange light in his eye as he hurried across the room to greet her, welcoming hands stretched out. It was really too much. He was such a complete old darling.

"My dearest girl!" he cried. "Now, where have you been?"

"I wanted a good walk."

His ear was quick to catch a note of distress in her voice. He suppressed his own high spirits: attentively he moved an easy chair nearer the fire: and with shy courtesy held up the cushion for the right place in the small of her back: handed her a cigarette, lighted a spill... she adored the deference he managed to convey by his little attentions. Then he sat unobtrusively down by her, with a sigh, as though of pleasure to be with her.

She put her hand on his knee. It was the most beastly shame. And to get all soppy as she was getting would not improve matters.

"If you want to know what, Old Man."

She suddenly stopped. He waited.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," she said abruptly.

He gently suggested that anything troubling her mind did matter.

"It's nothing. Only if you want to know what's really spiteful, you'll get one nice girl's opinion of another . . ."

Mr. Buffum eyed her keenly over his glasses. The little lines round his eyes deepened in secret mirth.

"I am afraid a dear girl like Miss Patty is not quite your sort. It pleased me to see how delightful you were to my friends at lunch. All the more because . . ."

Oh! Law! Now it was coming. Now he'd beat delicately round the bush. Now in his quaint Victorian manner he'd break the glad tidings "she is to be something, ahem! more than a friend." She steeled herself to listen. She felt his eyes on her, but could not look at him. She waited. Nothing came. She turned to ask sharply:

"Because what?"

"Because of that."

" What?"

"Not liking them."

He'd funked it. Swerved away. She must still be waiting: worse than in a dentist's chair, tipped backwards with your mouth gagged waiting.

"I am so happy."

Heavens, it was going to be bad!

"I have a surprise . . . a secret . . ."
She gripped the arms of her chair, steeling her nerves for the wrench. These pauses were dreadful to bear.

In a soft voice he spoke at last: "Can't you guess?"

"Perhaps I can. But for goodness sake

have it out and tell me!"

"What would be the only thing that could gladden a nice man's heart?" he

same when that little . . . Men have no sense, no delicacy, no vaguest decency of feeling."

Niece Lucia was losing control of her-

 self .

"I thought it could not be for this week-



murmured. Her words to him on one occasion had stuck in his mind.

"Look here! It's not fair . . ." she burst out.

"There's nothing to be upset about, I assure you."

"Oh, very likely not. It'll be just the

end. To come this afternoon. With you in the house."

She swallowed with decision and managed to say in a firm voice which she intended to be kind and encouraging:

"Yes. Tell me all about Patty."

"Oh, ha! Patty, yes. I was afraid you

noticed something as you passed the drawing-room window. Poor child. Yes. She was feeling lonely, she said, and er . . . it was a little embarrassing. Her father thought . . . I'm afraid he rather domineers . . . it was very sweet of her to suggest it . . . a little trying . . . I took her for a drive in the Loganda. You didn't suppose by any chance that I . . . er . . . was . . . as you might say . . . having any?"

What a rush of relief!

Niece Lucia scrutinised his face. you would, would you!" she thought.

"I'm not sure, Uncle, whether I think

you're a very nice man."

Some things—some feelings—perhaps, she might not be able to master, but she would rise from the dead to score off Uncle. That was quite certain. Her face grew long. She hummed a solemn tune. She surveyed him with the kind but disapproving scrutiny with which an elderly spinster might survey an erring boy caught kissing the pretty housemaid.

"Curious that men should always take that line. From Adam onwards. I could quite understand in a way . . . "

"My dear, I assure you..."

interrupted, but she continued:

"Though, of course, to take such immediate advantage of her father's—temporary absence—and with a girl so obviously trusting and feminine—not the adventurous kind of girl who can look after herself. But don't please think I care . . . it's not my business at all how you choose to behave in your own house to defenceless women . . ."

"My dear, I beg of you, you must really believe me . . ."

"Believe that a girl like Patty, a girl so innocent and confiding as Patty, climbed on to your knee and asked you to marry her. . . . I'll try and do anything to oblige you, dear Uncle. . . . Perhaps you'll ask me to believe that that Prince of Good Fellows, her father, told his dear obedient child to behave in this manner."

"I know it sounds a little strange," faltered Mr. Buffum.

Niece Lucia drew herself up demurely. "To me you are just simply the bad lad of the village; and I shall feel it my duty to warn my artless young friends against your machinations. Host, too, in your own house. Getting Pa out of the way on a business errand, sending me out for a long walk. Oh, you ancient iniquity!"

She could keep it up no longer. Uncle's piteous face was one immense expostulation. She gave way to consuming, conquering laughter, through which Mr. Buffum made out the words, "I'll teach you to play tricks on me, Old Man!" To which in bewilderment he stammered, questioning:

"I beg your pardon?" "Play tricks on me."

"Tricks? Ah well, yes. I noticed you pass the window: and thought you might jump to your own conclusions. That's true. But to be serious, dear. I wish you to be serious, dear."

He took hold of her hands. "There might have been a time . . ." He let go her hands to smooth his brow. "I used to accept as a fact . . . before I knew . . . before you came into . . ."

"Go on, Old Man, tell me."

"That a wife was a sort of clinging responsibility, which I could never venture to assume . . . well now . . . a womanoh, don't you think I shall ever approve of all your horrid modern ways of going on; I never shall !--but now I can imagine a woman having a life of her own, a world of her own . . . even possibly being in her own attractive way a friend, because she can be . . . well . . . herself . . . Miss Patty is the perfect clinging responsibility . . . and I'm very, very sorry for her. Now ... Now. Sshh! I won't be led out of my elderly depth into importunate argument . . . My real secret's this . . . never in my life had champagne of my own in the house. But I've got some. Help me open my own first bottle. What? A good occasion. This evening. Now. Then finish it at supper. Eh?"

"Oh, Old Man! You did upset me, dear. I couldn't have borne it if you'd . . ."

"Ssshhh! Come along!

pagne . . ."

'I'm not so silly as you think. She told me she was going to . . . Hurrah! Patty as Patty can, she's missed the boat!"

IN MID-OCEAN

By LAURENCE G. GREEN

ILLUSTRATED BY ROLAND M. CHANDLER

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Cavendish was feeling lonely and uneasy. He sprawled in the stern of the little ketch, now staring at the white and bubbly ribbon of the wake, now watching the rat. He was alone in a blue and gold circle of the South Atlantic. As he watched the sun touch the taut blue line of the horizon he wondered whether the people who said that he was mad were right. And he spoke to himself, after the manner of very lonely men.

"Sailing round the world in a fifteentonner, with a rat for company—perhaps

they are right," he said slowly.

The rat had come aboard at St. Helena. now a thousand miles astern. Gaunt and hungry it had been-evidently a welltravelled ship's rat that knew when to sign off a starvation packet and look for a more comfortable berth. It had slipped on board unseen and stowed away somewhere just before he made sail on the long run to Table Bay. Must have come in that case of rope and canvas sent to him by the master of the cargo-boat anchored near by. A real seafaring old rat that had wandered from ship to ship, visiting most of the ports of the world, tasting the crumbs of the world. Perhaps it had webbed feet, like ancient sailors were supposed to grow. Cavendish looked down curiously at the rat, and then laughed nervously at himself. No good getting queer ideas into his head. He was still seven hundred miles from Table Bay, and if anything went wrong with him . . .

Gazing to wind'ard for signs of changing weather, he scanned the darkening sea and sky, and clambered for'ard to lower cruising tops'l for the night. "No use taking chances, carrying too much sail at night," he told himself. Earlier in the voyage he would have carried on under full sail in fine weather like this, and chuckled when he read the log in the morning. Now there was just a tinge of anxiety in his sea-blue eyes. He cursed himself for the fantastic

visions of his imagination and crept back to the cockpit to watch the rat.

"Bo'sun!" he growled suddenly. The rat, hearing the voice of authority, sat up on its hind legs. A sleek rat now, well fed and contented, green eyes fixed on the man. Cavendish picked up the scrap of ship's biscuit the rat had been gnawing and held it over the rat's head.

"Why didn't I catch you and heave you into the ditch when I first saw you, bo'sun, ah?"

The rat blinked at him, whisked his long tail about his haunches, and touched the man's brown hand with his whiskers.

"Yes, that's what you did when I woke up and found you alongside my bunk—scrounging for food," Cavendish mumbled. "Affectionate little beggar, aren't you? That saved your life, bo'sun, acting like a dog instead of a bilge rat. Most unnatural, I call it. Who ever heard of a sailor having a rat on watch with him?"

The rat frisked round Cavendish's hand, brushing against the flesh, occasionally biting

a finger gently.

"Play with the skipper, would you?" Cavendish went on. "Bold as a Cardiff barmaid—and always with your weather eye open for grub." He peered into the semi-gloom of the cabin, where a clock was screwed to the bulkhead. "Five bells—must get the supper under way. You stay up here and keep a bright look-out, or I'll put you in irons, you rat!"

Cavendish went through the hatchway, put a match to the swinging lamp in the saloon, and passed for ard to the stoves and food-lockers. He looked at the baskets of vegetables and fruit, the cases of canned soups, fish, meat, bottles and boxes of

delicacies.

"Too much trouble to cook a fancy dinner," he said aloud. "Tongue, ship's biscuit, and a few apples—that's enough for to-night."

The salt-laden air of mid-ocean usually

gave him a great appetite. Some evenings he killed time by preparing a dinner of many courses. He even devised entrées and savouries, and sang as he smoked his cigar on deck afterwards. In the tropics, lying on the planking under the purple bowl of heaven, red sparks trailing to leeward, he had been happy. Far from land, but never afraid of loneliness. To-night he was depressed. He swallowed his food quickly, turned down the lamp, and went on deck.

"Meat and biscuit for you, bo'sun," he said, eyeing the expectant rat. "Take it away to your bunk—I've seen enough of you." The rat dragged its food through an

opening into the sail-locker.

Cavendish surveyed the wave-tops moodily. The breeze was moderately fresh, sending the ketch through the water with an easy swinging motion at a good six knots. The speed, the wide spaces of the ocean, the sense of unlimited freedom, usually brought a song to his lips after dinner on these fine nights at sea. He often recalled his young days as a brassbounder in a tall sailing ship, flying before the westerlies. He would see again the line of men in shining oilskins, raising a chanty as they laid on to the halyards; and he would whisper the words softly, and roar the chorus as though a crowd of shellbacks were singing with him:

"As I was a-walking down Paradise Street
With a way-hay, blow the man down!
A saucy young policeman I happened to meet,
Oh, give us some time to blow the man down!"

That was a song for nights when he felt satisfied with life, when he gloated over the achievement of sailing a small yacht south from England for thousands of miles, bound round the world. To-night he was morose; his song fitted his mood:

"They call me Hanging Johnny,
Away-i-oh!
They call me Hanging Johnny,
So hang, boys, hang!
"I'll hang you all together,
"Away-i-oh!"

That was a chanty for a frozen Cape Horn night, with icebergs about, both watches aloft for hours, reefing and cursing their frost-bitten hands. That was what Cavendish sang, alone out there in the South Atlantic—a lonely man with little to do and only a rat for company.

CAVENDISH took a last look round the deck, saw that the side-lights were burning brightly, glanced at the compass and noted the log. The tiller was lashed. He never had to touch it except to alter course, for the ketch had fine lines and her sails were well balanced.

"She'll do for the night," he muttered. "It won't blow any harder—only logging five now."

There were two bunks in the snug cabin. He pulled off his blue trousers and turned in on the lee side. There was a bookshelf over the bunk, crammed with Conrad and Stevenson. He chose *Typhoon* and wondered how the ketch would come through such an ordeal.

"You can't play the fool with the sea," he decided at last. "I'll ship a mate when I get to Cape Town—if I don't forget how lonely I've been as soon as I see the land." He laughed grimly and pulled up the blankets. But his brain, having done too little work, was in that dangerous state when it begins to feed on itself. His mind explored every possibility of danger. Suppose he fell ill? That idea kept him awake for a long time. When he did fall asleep it was a light sleep from which he awoke suddenly and completely. His sailor's instinct told him that something was wrong.

Dawn was showing dimly through the skylight. Before he reached the deck he knew what had happened. The ketch should have been heeling over on her port side. Instead, she was rolling, the canvas slatting against the stays noisily, the boom swinging over the cockpit, jerking the mainsheet viciously.

Becalmed! Cavendish felt that he would rather face a gale. You could run gloriously before a gale if the wind was abaft the beam; run under a wisp of canvas and know that you were making a good day's run. But these doldrums! Cavendish gazed round the empty circle of sea. His keen eyes sighted no vestige of a breeze. It was uncomfortable. The easy and exhilarating motion of the yacht running free had changed to an irritating roll. "Making no headway at all," he grunted disgustedly, hauling in the mainsheet to stop the shock of the heavy boom.

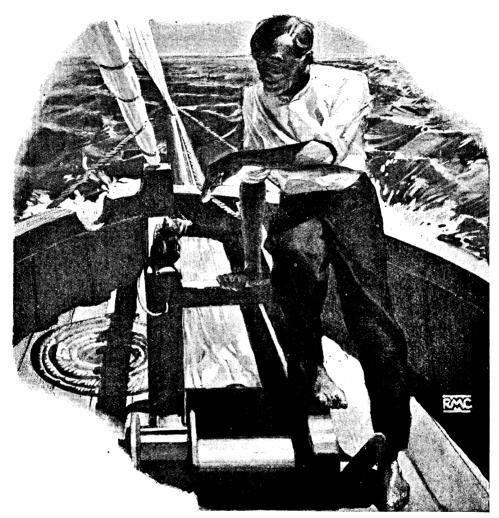
Cavendish did not sleep again that night. Gone was the soothing murmur of the water along the planking close to his head. Gear that he had thought properly stowed was banging about in the fo'c'sle. The tell-tale compass above his bunk told him that the yacht was drifting off her course.

Well, nothing could be done. He could scratch the mast, of course, and whistle for a wind, as sailors always do in a calm. But

he had no faith in those traditional remedies now. He just lay on his bunk, ill at ease, hoping that his luck would turn—and vaguely speculating on the length of the delay.

The rat scurried into the cabin suddenly from a chink in the bulkhead. It squeaked a sort of morning greeting. Cavendish

speeding along he had not felt the heat. Now the sun smothered the unshaded deck and the cabin became intolerable. The rolling not only affected his temper; it caused the halyards to chafe and fray, so that he was kept busy replacing a rope here, fitting a new block there. He went to the water-tank in the fo'c'sle often, for the



"Cavendish picked up the scrap of ship's biscuit and held it over the rat's head."

glanced at it sourly and turned his face away. He was in no frame of mind to play with a rat.

He made breakfast—a tiring job with that incessant rolling upsetting his pots. The rat waited confidently for the usual scraps. He flung a potato and some biscuit into the cockpit, just to get rid of the rat.

It was an unhappy day. With the yacht

exertion in the hot sunshine parched him. When he realised that no wind was likely to come that day he lowered the sails. That made things a little more bearable on board. But still there were no signs of wind.

Evening brought little relief. The ketch was still drifting about, sometimes smacking her bowsprit into the swell, occasionally dipping her rail under as a large roller

approached. At dawn there seemed to be a light air from the north, and Cavendish made sail hopefully. But even that faint movement vanished when the sun rose. Nothing but the greasy, hateful swell. He tried to occupy his mind by making work for himself. He brought his spare sails on deck, and sat with palm and needle repairing the slightest indications of wear. But at noon it was too hot even to sew. He ate little that day. In the evening he decided to check his stores.

"Afraid of running short, I suppose," he mocked himself as he opened each locker to count his tins of corned beef and biscuit. With a queer sense of misgiving the idea occurred to him that he might as well examine his water-barrels as well. The calm was telling on his nerves. He had never worried about the water before. "I can use more fresh water than a passenger on a liner—and still have gallons and gallons to spare when I reach port. No need to worry about catching rain-water." That was what he told people on shore.

Yet here he was with a tin mug in his hand testing the barrels which he kept filled as a reserve supply. Strong new barrels, they were, with shining brass bands round them. He felt thirsty, for the sun had been heating the cabin all day. He turned on the tap, filled his mug, and drank. Next moment he spat it out. It tasted musty. Quite impossible to drink it. He took the mug on deck and looked anxiously at the water. Partieles of rotten wood were floating in it.

Thoroughly alarmed, he tried the second reserve barrel. That was foul, too; the water was the same dark colour. Cavendish stared up at the sky, praying silently for a glimpse of a rain-cloud. Nothing.

But his mouth was dry, and all the fear of death from thirst was upon him. He dropped through the hatchway again in a panic and sounded the tank containing the rest of his water. It was half full. He made a quick calculation.

"I'll have to cut down my allowance to two glasses a day—one glass if the wind doesn't come soon," he decided. He looked at the mug in his hand, felt an intense desire to drink, and turned on the tap. A sip, and he put the mug down on the seat beside him. "Make it last a long time—it's precious," he muttered.

There was a scratching on the leather cushion. The rat had come out. When Cavendish turned his head the rat was drinking out of the mug. Insane fury gripped the man. He jumped up quickly, so that the rat leapt to the floor, terrified.

"Stealing my water!" he yelled hysterically, and picking up a marlinspike, flung it at the rat. But the quick-witted rat had seen the danger. It scuttled away, disappeared in the fo'c'sle. The heavy spike quivered in the deck.

CAME the third ghastly day of the calm. A day of cloudless blue and relentless sunshine. Cavendish waited until noon for his first drink. That needed an effort of will. Often he found himself moving towards the tap. Only the thought of rolling about there in mid-ocean without any water at all restrained him.

The rat was in hiding. Cavendish searched for it in the sail-locker and found a sail in holes, obviously gnawed by the rat. This, he realised, was a new danger. The rat might attack all sorts of essential gear. He began a frantic inspection of the ropes and stores in the fo'c'sle—and found that the rat had been foraging for itself among the fresh stores. Vegetables and cheese in an open locker had been nibbled; fragments of a tomato were scattered about the deck.

"I'll kill that rat—kill it before it kills me," thought Cavendish, dazed by what he had found.

But where was the rat? He turned out the sail-locker again, finding nothing but scraps of canvas and rope. He sought for his enemy in the dark chain-locker, under the cabin floor-boards, in every corner of the There was a narrow space running from the cabin aft to the stern-post, beneath the cockpit. He crawled in there with a There was only just room to move. As he reached the rudder-head the rat darted out from the blackness, raced across the man's body, and escaped. Cavendish could do nothing in that confined space. He realised that he would never catch the rat like that. Damp and dirty after his crawling in the bilge, he struggled back to the cabin. The rat had won the first round.

Cavendish thought of all the ways of killing a rat, rejecting them one by one. He had no traps, no poison. A shot might penetrate the hull of the little ship, and he did not want to have to plug a leak in mid-ocean. Besides, the rat never gave him a chance. It hid in the darkness, never stirred while he was moving about.

And still the ketch rolled lazily, making no progress towards the Cape. Cavendish had

to take a hold of his feverish imagination and

face the facts squarely.

"Seven hundred miles from Cape Town, no wind or sign of wind, short of water, and a blasted rat eating my sails," he groaned. The grim possibilities staggered him. Then stern necessity jolted his brain, gave him a plan.

"Rats must have water, same as humans," he argued. "I'll stow the fruit and vegetables where he can't get them, and bring

him out mad with thirst."

He did more. Before turning in that night he soaked a piece of biscuit in seawater, left it in a saucer on the fo'c'sle floor. About midnight he heard a loud scratching in the fo'c'sle. The moment he put his foot out of the bunk the noise stopped. He went into the fo'c'sle with a torch and found that the rat had been attacking one of the wooden food-lockers. The salted biscuit was untouched.

"I'll get him before he gets me," laughed Cavendish wildly. "That's a point to me."

In the morning he found the storm trysail in holes—a vital sail of strong canvas. "Hell!" said Cavendish. Another blazing day, it was, with the sea glaring all round and hurting his eyes, and the sky an aching blue that promised neither wind nor rain. Cavendish looked at the clock every half-hour, then every five minutes. Ten minutes before noon he sat down next to the water-tank, mug in hand, waiting for the hour when he allowed himself to drink his blessed water ration.

When the time came he filled the mug carefully, using both hands to shut off the tap. For a moment, as he drank, he felt better. But the cool water on his palate gave him a craving for more. His hand went out to draw a second ration. But that was madness, he reminded himself. His tortured mind began to work again. Suppose the tank sprang a leak, or the washer on the tap gave way? Better drink while he could. He filled the mug again, sucked down the water hurriedly, then swore at himself. "You're weak!" he snarled angrily. "Too weak to beat a rat! You'll remember that extra mug when the last of the water's gone."

In a calmer moment afterwards he decided to do without his water ration that evening. But at seven he was watching the clock. At eight he filled the mug and drank.

Though time dragged, Cavendish found that he could not read. He had been up and

down the ladder all day, looking for the breeze that never came. Now he was exhausted. The uneven, unsatisfying motion of the yacht had tired his limbs. The unpleasant reality of the moment, the ghastly uncertainty of the future, had sapped his nerves and wearied his brain. He made a last round of inspection in the fo'c'sle, saw that the food-lockers were secure and the water-tap tightly closed, and dropped down on his bunk. "A little more of this, and the rat will win," he thought. "I wonder how long the little devil will last without water—and what he will do next?"

In this melancholy state he fell into a doze. He was soon awake again. A stabbing pain in his right ear made him jump from his bunk.

"My God!—the rat!" he screamed. His fingers trembled as he found matches. He dared not look in the mirror. His hand, held over the injured ear, dripped blood. He wanted water—water to clear the torment of his mind, water to wash his wound. There could be no resisting that urgent demand. He drank, and filled the mug again to wipe away the blood.

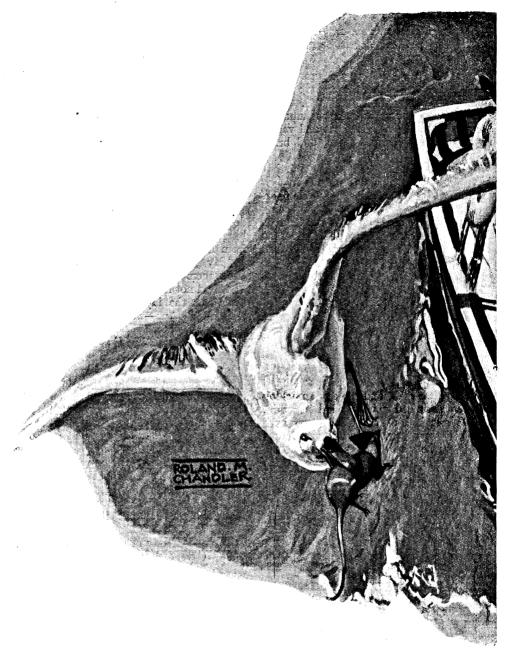
Here was a new and unexpected terror. Now it would be impossible to think of sleep. The rat might go for his throat next—or his eyes . . .

He bandaged his ear and looked into the mirror. Pale, he was, his face lined, eyes frightened. He sat up for the rest of the night. At times he could hear the rat, sometimes in the stern, at others beneath him. Useless to search in the dark recesses of the ship for such a small and alert enemy.

THE sixth day of the calm dawned. To Cavendish it seemed that an age of nightmare stretched between the evening he had sung a chanty on deck and this dawn. He limped stiffly into the fresh air. An albatross swung down from the blue, circled round the ship. White it was, a great and graceful albatross.

"Soul of a sailor lost at sea in that bird," muttered Cavendish, remembering the belief of every shellback and admiring the noble form of the albatross in spite of his pain. "Wish he'd lend a hand aboard this packet."

He went below, meaning to force himself to eat something. He had to avoid salty foods, and he was trying to make up his mind when a strange sound on deck brought him in a second to the hatch.

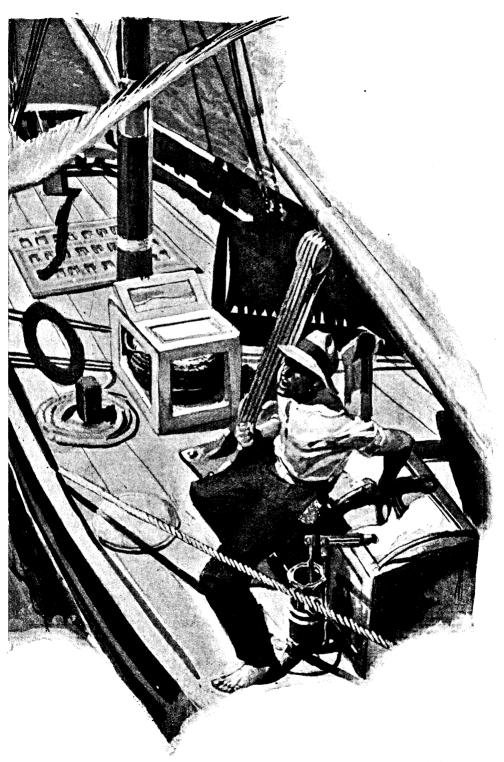


The albatross was poised above the ketch, almost motionless in mid-air. Then it came lower, glided over the stern. Cavendish stared at the living thing in the beak of the albatross; stared, and then shouted with relief. The rat! It had been plucked from the deck by the old sailor whose soul lived in the magnificent form of the albatross. That was the way Cavendish reasoned. As he watched, the beak of the albatross

opened, and it cried the raven-like cry of its kind. Cavendish saw the rat strike the water, swim for a little while, then disappear. . . .

He was triumphant. He looked round confidently for wind, knowing that wind must come now that his ship no longer sheltered a hoodoo. On the horizon he saw a small white cloud.

Cavendish, a sane man, made sail.



"Cavendish stared at the living thing in the beak of the albatross; stared and then shouted with relief."



Sport and General.

THE CRAWL-STROKE AS PRACTISED BY MISS GERTRUDE EDERLE.

SWIMMING IN THE MODERN WAY

By SID G. HEDGES

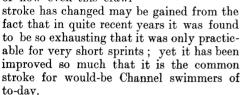
HE person who learned to swim before or at the beginning of this century, and has since been out of touch with professional and competitive swimming, finds the art to-day completely changed. Strokes which were considered the last word in speed and efficiency have been abandoned as slow and faulty; feats which were thought incredible have become almost commonplace. So long ago as 1875 Captain Webb swam the Channel, and until 1911 no one succeeded in imitating him. But during the last few years, so frequently has the Channel been conquered, that newspapers, which in former days would have given a whole front page, have hardly spared a few inches in unimportant columns to record each successive victory. The average time of the first three Channel swimmers was roughly $23\frac{1}{2}$ hours; the average of the first three successful ones in 1926 (two of them being women) was 123 hours. It is not long since it was considered

improbable that the hundred yards would ever be swum in so short a time as one minute; but the world's record now stands below 50 seconds.

From this it will be seen that swimming in the modern way is indeed something new; it is doubtful if any other sport can show changes so remarkable.

The transformation is due principally to the revision of old strokes and the adoption of new. The breast-stroke retains its position as the method of greatest utility, but it has been altered in several important particulars; the side-stroke and the overarm have almost disappeared, and are rarely learned except by exhibition swimmers and dilettanti. Back-stroke has remained invaluable for life-saving work, but a completely new style has been evolved, termed the "back-crawl," which is invariably used for racing purposes. The trudgeon-stroke has blazed to its zenith within this century, and is now in a decline. A still later stroke

—the crawl—took the swimming world by storm and has since undergone many modifications; but it is the modern form of crawl which now holds place as the most popular swimming stroke in the world. Some idea of how even this crawl-



In short, then, the principal modern ways of swimming are by breast-stroke, back-stroke, and crawl—and each is performed in a style of comparatively recent development. One may gain interesting evidence of the rapidly changed conditions by examining the swimming-books on the shelves of public libraries—in almost every volume there is more or less matter that has become obsolete. Similarly, swimming instructors vary in their methods according to the closeness or otherwise of their touch with the most progressive circles.

It seems, however, that some degree of finality—at any rate for a time—has been reached with the three strokes to which I have referred, and it is therefore possible for anyone with some previous knowledge of swimming to adapt his or her ability to the modern mode. And for the non-swimmer, persevering and well-directed practice, even during the fortnight's holiday at the seaside, will accomplish much.

Let us examine in more detail these modern modes of swimming.

THE BREAST-STROKE.

Practically everyone who swims has some knowledge of breast-stroke, except the few extreme modernists who refuse to see any-



THE BREAST-STROKE OF TO-DAY.

thing good in things old, and so believe in crawl-stroke, first, last, and always. One American, for instance, has written of "instructors who teach beginners the crazy old breast-stroke and terribly handicap them for future speed and grace in the real art of swimming"; and, on another occasion, "on no account teach any child the old breast-stroke unless you desire to ruin it. as only very versatile children can overcome the terrible handicap of that ridiculous stroke." Such sentiments show how far the pendulum has swung, but so long as speed is not the sole aim of swimmers the breast-stroke will retain its popularity, for it is absurd to deny that, in its modern form particularly, it possesses both beauty and power.

the old breast-stroke it With customary to use the arms in long sweeps. very much like a pair of oars, keeping them close beneath the surface throughout and ending their stroke when each had performed exactly a quarter-circle, so as to come in line with the shoulders. Nowadays the arms, instead of remaining parallel with the top of the water, take a strong downward slant as they sweep round from the front, and so finish up with the hands six to twelve inches deeper than at the beginning of the propulsive movement. The movement, too, is little more than half of its former length—the arms forming with each other an angle of only about sixty to seventy-five degrees at the end of their

The chief reason for the adoption of this

newer arm-stroke is that it facilitates breathing. The horizontal sweep of the earlier manner did nothing to raise the head for breathing purposes, and the mouth and nose frequently found themselves troubled by their proximity to the surface. The difficulty largely disappears when the downward slant is adopted, for



BREAST-STROKE.

at each arm-stroke the head is cleanly raised as high as may be required. During the arm recovery. $_{
m the}$ head however, allowed to drop, so that exhalation is effected beneath the water. may sound startling to swimmers of the older school, but it need not be. for such breathing-out is not difficult. As during swimming the breath is

expelled by the nose and mouth more forcibly than at ordinary times, it follows that the exhalation is rather quick, and it is consequently desirable that the breathing-out should be postponed long enough to enable the inhalation to follow it immediately. Breathing-in is effected through the mouth, not by the nose. You must, so to speak, gulp in a big mouthful of air, then check the entry of water as the mouth submerges again by closing the back of the throat—as when beginning to pronounce the letter K.

Before leaving the consideration of this arm-stroke let us refer to one immensely important principle which has in recent years come to be applied to breast-stroke as well as to other forms of swimming—that of relaxation during recovery movements. Muscles which are kept taut quickly become tired, so that if, during part of each complete cycle of movements of a swimming stroke, muscles can be relaxed, then the swimmer will be able to keep going for a longer time. Thus, at the end of the rigid, slanting pull of the arms in breaststroke all tautness must disappear, and the restful limpness which results should be maintained while the elbows drop to the sides of the body and the hands move beneath the chin preparatory to the smooth forward thrust which precedes the next armpull.

Summarised, then, the chief modern changes in breast-stroke are the short

slanting pull of the arms, the submerged exhalation, and the recovery limpness.

The action of the legs has not been similarly modified, but its co-ordination with the arms is of great importance. For a



THE CRAWL-STROKE OF TO-DAY.

considerable part of the stroke the legs remain straight and together, so that the fullest possible "gliding" effect is gained. Then, simultaneously with the drawing up of the arms, the legs are recovered, and immediately afterwards they kick widely apart and instantly sweep in together, like scissor blades closing. This last double movement is performed while the arms are sliding forward.

CRAWL-SWIMMING.

The great objection to the older forms of swimming was that their recovery, or negative, movements were too pronounced. In some cases—breast-stroke for example—all the limbs were recovering at the same instant, so that the swimmer's progress received a sharp check, and he went forward in spurts and pauses. With sidestroke some improvement was made by arranging that at least one propulsive movement should always be going on, and so a more continuous progress achieved. weaknesses still remained—the recoveries were impeding because they necessitated so great a "drawing up" and because they were made in the water, which offered considerable resistance. These two problems therefore remained—the lessening of the negative movements, and the avoidance of water resistance. The next stroke to be evolved—over-arm side-stroke—was an advance in the second respect, for it allowed one arm to swing over through the air in



CRAWL-STROKE.



BACK-CRAWL STROKE.

readiness for each new stroke. Then came trudgeon, in which both arms recovered out of water, though still the legs were very hampering in their drawing up for the kick. A great advance was made by the crawl-stroke, for in it the legs merely fluttered up and down on the surface, and this was found to be as helpful as the kick, and without any troublesome recovery action. The ideal now seemed to be attained—both arms were recovered out of water, and as they worked alternately there was always one in action; and the leg drive was quite continuous. Unfortunately, however, though unprecedented speed had been gained, this new stroke was found to be terribly exhausting, largely because its normal action had to be interrupted to allow for breathing, since the head was buried in the water most of the time and swimmers therefore took breath only when absolutely compelled. Beside this, all the limbs were taut practically all the time. Patient study and experiment have gradually eliminated these drawbacks-until we have the modern crawl, a thing of exceeding beauty and seemingly a more "natural" means of progression through the water than any other mode of swimming.

This crawl is neither difficult to understand nor to acquire. You may set about it hopefully the very next time you go for a bathe, no matter what your age or sex or your previous ability. Roughly, it is a style in which the body lies face downward along the surface, while the arms swing



BACK-CRAWL SWIMMING.

over and over alternately and the legs flail up and down, remaining straight, just beneath the surface.

First of all, if you would learn crawl, you must get a mastery of balance and body position. The best plan is to thrust off from the side of a bathing-pool, so that

you glide across in the necessary flat position, with arms beyond the head, just as if you were completing a plunge. Then begin with the leg action. Each foot is pointed and turned slightly inwards and the legs then flutter continuously up and down, passing and repassing each other, and never breaking quite out of the water nor sinking more than twelve or fifteen inches. For the down drives there should be fullest vigour; the upward movements being less strong, so that relaxation is obtained. This leg-thrash is performed at whatever speed seems most comfortable.

Each arm, lifting from the water by the thigh, moves forward limply until it is beyond the head. Here it dips; stiffens; and instantly begins its backward drive down beneath the body; the elbow bending when the half-way point is reached, in order that the forearm can remain vertical till the end of the movement. Some little rolling of the body is natural, and this allows opportunity for breath to be gulped in as the mouth clears the surface—always during the recovery of the same arm. Exhalation fits in, beneath the surface, while the other arm swings over, the mouth not troubling to rise clear of the water.

As soon as you begin to gain some facility with the full crawl combination you will find a natural rhythm coming unconsciously into your stroke. Most probably it will turn out that you are making three leg-beats to each arm-stroke, and slightly accenting the first of each triplet—as in musical

six-eight time. This most popular variety of crawl is termed the "six-beat"; but there can also be a four-beat, and an eight-beat, and even a ten-beat—the names are self-explanatory. Many swimmers "change gear" from one beat to another by varying the speed of their

arms according as they wish to alter the pace of their swimming, so beautifully adaptable is this modern crawl.

In America to-day crawl-swimming is generally taught to beginners in preference to breast-stroke, many authorities holding that its movements are much more easily acquired. Advocates of the same motion are also to be found in England, though their point of view has not yet won general favour. The first flood of enthusiasm over something new has not yet abated, and it is still too soon to say what will be first taught to the children of future generations.

THE BACK-CRAWL STROKE.

It is a fairly obvious development for the modern crawl-stroke to be adapted for the use of back-swimmers, and the back-crawl is an almost exact replica of the parent style. There is the same leg-thrash, though now with chief vigour in the up-beats. The arms also work alternately, and each recovers through the air in complete relaxation, so that fingers fall apart, hand droops from the wrist, and forearm from elbow, until

the arm perforce becomes straight near the water beyond the head. Exhalation under water now is unnecessary, for the head remains above the surface all the time.

Just one peculiarity of the stroke may give slight trouble if you happen to be well drilled in the old-style of back-swimming. It was important in the former stroke that the middle of the body should be awash and the head pressed right back until the ears were immersed. But for back-crawl the hips are slightly sunk so that the legs do not break above the surface, and the head is lifted sufficiently for the mouth and nose to be clear during the rather turbulent happenings around it. The rhythmic coordination of arms and legs is still of great importance, but one's natural rhythm can only be discovered by experience.

So here we have the three modern modes of swimming. If you master them in practice you will have reason to be pleased with your prowess; if your mastery should remain theoretical, you will at least be in a position to appreciate the swimming of to-day.

WILD GEESE.

GREY-green marshes smooth and wide,
Map-like stretch on every side;
Narrow dykes bisect and cross,
Russet reed-plumes bend and toss;
Crooked bushes warped and thinned
Publish the prevailing wind;
Searching wind, that croons and wails
Through the windmills' upflung sails—
Wind, whose sharp austerity
Brings the salt sting of the sea.

Voluble, with plaintive sounds,
Like an aerial pack of hounds—
From the dun clouds' folded edge
Come the wild geese, wedge on wedge.
Overhead in perfect line
Speeds each accurate design.
Uniform in poise and pace,
Not a unit losing place,
Flying swiftly, flying high—
Garrulous against the sky.

JESSIE POPE.



By C. Sholto Douglas

(With Photographs by the Author)

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WAY far up in the North Atlantic, cautiously stretching its nose into the Arctic, lies the great safety valve of Western Europe, perennially blowing off clouds of steam. Iceland, with its ancient, though slowly changing, civilisation, may be substituting the wireless orchestra for the reading of the Sagas, but this circumstance has little effect on the elemental Furies beneath the crust of the earth.

Probably the best-known features of Iceland are the geysirs, Hekla, and Iceland spar. Hekla, though at one time perhaps the most famous volcano in the world, has lived on its reputation for many years; in fact, it now seems to have retired from business altogether, and lies thickly coated with snow from year's end to year's end. It may, however, break out again at any time, as even the best volcanoes are unreliable. Iceland spar, or calcite, is well known for its double-refracting powers—that is,

if a clear crystal is placed over a line drawn on a sheet of paper, the line when seen through the crystal will appear as two parallel lines close together, instead of one as would be seen through a piece of glass.

To come to the geysirs. In the south-west of this country of frost and fire, and particularly in the regions round Reykir and Geysir, the ground is warm underfoot, and innumerable small springs well up to form streams and pools of scaldingly hot water. Late on a summer evening, after the sun has at last decided to set, one may see the steam rising in the twilight like tufts of smoke from countless altars, the evening light giving an appearance of solidity to the vapour that was lacking in the brilliant sunshine earlier in the day.

The Great Geysir, which has given its name to all others up and down the world and also to our domestic water-boiler, lies about seventy-five miles east of the capital



ARRIVAL AT GREAT GEYSIR.

Ours was one of the first cars to be driven so far inland.

—Reykjavik—which is on the coast near the south-west corner of the island. Great Geysir consists of an almost circular lake, approximately twenty-five yards across, filled to the very brim with beautiful blue water of amazing clearness, which even if not actually boiling is a great deal too hot to bear one's hand in. The sides of the lake can be seen shelving rapidly down like an immense funnel to a central shaft some ten feet in diameter, which is of unknown depth, and out of which great bubbles slowly rise to burst on the surface and so thicken the steam which drifts into the air.

In its prime, many many years ago, there

would be occasional rumbles and splutterings down in the depths, culminating at irregular intervals in explosions of steam which blew a great jet of boiling water out of the central shaft; each spurt of water would be more violent than the last, until the "head" of steam was so terrific that it sent the water up in a column ten feet thick to a height of two hundred feet. It would then die down and remain dormant for a few days, or maybe only for a few hours. In the course of time, earthquakes took place and spoilt the effect, so that these gigantic cruptions gradually became fewer and finally ceased. Some bright soul then discovered that by



LOOKING DOWN INTO THE BLUE WATER OF THE CRATER.

putting soap in the water the geysir could be made to work once at an uncertain time after the dose was administered. The last time the Great Geysir erupted was in 1916, when a party of Americans cut up and threw in sixty pounds of soap at four o'clock in the morning. They remained near by to await the result. At first nothing happened, so they had breakfast and continued to wait. They waited all the morning and had dinner; then the water appeared

all the little geysirs in the group around the big one. One of these geysirs—now named Smidur after the workman, or "smith," who discovered it—was found to work quite well, throwing a column of water into the air to a height of about twenty feet, which after all is quite spectacular, even if not up to the style of the Great Geysir.

At present Smidur is very reliable, and a couple of bars of soap cut up into small



STEAM RISING FROM THE GREAT GEYSIR.

to become troubled, and to their immense satisfaction there was quite a good eruption.

So far so good. A few years later the King of Denmark paid a visit to his domain of Iceland, and of course went to see the Geysir. The Icelanders naturally wanted him to see it at its best, so they tipped in a whole cartload of soap, which the Geysir obligingly swallowed without turning a hair, much to the disgust of the monarch.

His visit was not entirely unfortunate, however, for the workmen accompanying his suite scurried round emptying soap into pieces will always provoke an eruption. The opinion of some people who had seen Smidur active was that the eruption lasted for several minutes, but our own stop-watch told a different tale. Sixty-one seconds after the soap was emptied in, activity began, and boiling water shot up out of the hole, which is about two feet in diameter, to a height of some eighteen feet, this being estimated by the relative height of a man standing at the side. Twenty seconds later all was quiet again, except for the comments of one of the spectators who had been stand-

ing a little too close and had got a bit scalded.

We were told in Reykjavik that the inhabitants of the farm at Geysir did not like visitors to bring their own soap, as they had some for sale on the spot. In view of this we did not take any, and found to our cost that the farmer got five kroner (about four shillings and sixpence) for two little bars of "Sunlight"!

In the vicinity are several of these small geysirs, and in spite of the fact that they usually ignore any soap they are made to swallow, they occasionally oblige with a javik there is a big group of hot springs, which can be heard spluttering and gurgling before they become visible. The most spectacular of these is in the bank of a hot stream about five feet wide, and consists of a horizontal blowhole which ejects intermittent spurts of boiling water, followed by two or three little spurts, then, as a special effort, several gallons will be shot right across the stream. The process is repeated continuously day and night.

Near at hand is a small geysir called Gryla, which is one of the few that do not require to be baited with soap, as it spouts



OVERFLOW FROM THE GREAT GEYSIR.

Boiling water welling up from the crater trickles over the edge, much of it evaporating in the process, the sediment building the edge of the crater slowly higher.

display. They are, however, very unreliable in this respect.

An exceedingly beautiful, although inactive, crater at Geysir consists of two round pools about thirty-five feet across, almost touching, leaving a pathway about a foot wide between them; this path is really a natural bridge, as the pools are connected below it and one can see through from one side to the other in the water a few feet below the surface. The water in these pools is an even deeper and more vivid blue than that in the Great Geysir.

About half-way to Geysir from Reyk-

ten or fifteen feet high regularly every two hours.

Small, quiet and well-behaved hot springs and streams are common up and down the country; in fact, many of the more enterprising farmers utilise them for heating their houses in the winter and for hot baths. Having an inexhaustible supply of almost boiling water for central heating purposes, these fortunate people do not worry unduly about the high cost of fuel during the long Arctic winter. The Reykjavik authorities have not yet managed to agree as to whether they should utilise the big hot springs

just outside the town for central heating in all the houses or for growing hothouse products such as cucumbers and tomatoes. At present there is a public swimming-bath which is warmed by this natural heat. The municipal laundry also takes its share of the free hot water, much of the washing being boiled out in the open in a kind of cement culvert through which the stream flows.

In the height of summer the Icelanders

enables one under favourable conditions to see mountains for a distance of a hundred and twenty miles, or on an average day over sixty miles. This is on the west coast or inland; the east coast is frequently shrouded in ground-mist, due to the cold air from the Polar ice-fields drifting down and meeting the comparatively warm Atlantic.

In the last few years the Government has been constructing motoring roads with great energy round the larger towns on



FISH-CURING AT REYKJAVIK.

The girl on the left is holding up a dried "sheet of cod which she has taken from the pile, which was stacked up the night before, and is now being spread out on the stones to dry in the sun.

revel in the brilliant sun shining through the clear atmosphere from midnight to midnight. Even in autumn the nights are not really dark, though they are beginning to pay back the daylight they have stolen from the winter. In December comes the dark week when the sun does not rise at all. A cheerless prospect, in spite of the fact that it never gets quite so dark as in England, owing to the wonderful displays of the Northern Lights and the greater brilliance of the moon in smokeless air. The extraordinary clarity of the atmosphere

the coast, the most extensive series being about Reykjavik. One runs to Reykir, another to Thingvalla—for centuries the home of the Althing, or Parliament, which now has its seat at the capital. These roads are excellent in the towns, quite good for a few miles out, then not so good, ultimately becoming very bad indeed before merging into the original pony-tracks. Much of the country traversed by them is a vast plain of lava, a road being made by removing the big lumps of lava from a strip two or three yards wide and then levelling



THE NATURAL MEANS OF LOCOMOTION IN ICELAND. Sturdy little ponies which are very quiet though left to roam at large in the summer if not needed for a few days or even weeks.

up the little lumps, leaving the traffic to complete the job. Bridges have been built over the rivers near the important towns; farther inland one fords them as best one may. This year, for the first time, motorcars have managed to get all the way from Reykjavik to Geysir, this having been made possible by the very dry season, as one river alone has to be forded thirty-one times on the journey out and thirty-one times coming back. A few inches more water in the river would render it impassable even to the skilful Icelandic drivers.

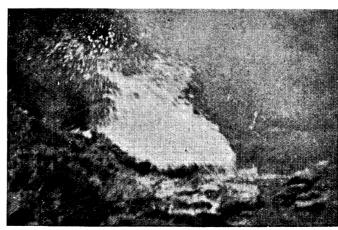
Still farther inland one must travel by pony. The native animals are rather larger than Shetland ponies and remarkably sturdy considering they are fed entirely on grass and hay. For journeys

of more than a day's duration it is usually necessary for each member of the party to have three ponies, one to ride, one for one's luggage, and one to relieve the others in turn; thus a small party with guides and ponies fitted out for an extensive tour becomes quite an imposing cavalcade. It is astonishing to see the amount of dust raised by a few trotting ponies travelling in single file. When touring in this fashion one can usually secure accommodation for the night at a farm-house, if the members of the party do not mind sleeping in very short beds or possibly even in the hav-barn. the more desolate and barren parts of the island, where farms are non-existent, it is necessary to carry camping equipment, which in turn means more ponies, with the inevitable result that a good deal of time is wasted each morning in packing everything into little bundles to hang on the pack-In spite of this, it is saddles. possible to average about twentyfive miles a day.

A striking feature of the country is the extraordinary tameness of the birds; whimbrels, golden plovers and curlews will betray a mild interest in passers-by, but as a general rule will not trouble to fly If need be they will step aside, or in

cases of great urgency they may condescend to jump.

When the first Viking settler landed on the island he brought with him among his other property sufficient sheep to meet the needs of the new colony. He was rather careless in the winter and so lost them all. He then climbed a mountain range to see if he could find a more promising district to move his household to, but was saddened to see a fiord full of icebergs. In disgust he returned to the land of his fathers, after christening the new country "Iceland," in the hope of warning other would-be settlers of the folly of trying to live there. In this he was only partially successful, for



A MINIATURE GEYSIR.

One of the jets of boiling water in the hot stream at Reykir.

later he was compelled to return for political reasons. In some ways he has had his revenge, for the blight he cast on the country by bestowing its unattractive name still scares many visitors from its hospitable shores. The more's the pity: for where else in the world can one find in one island such astoundingly varied natural phenomena as geysirs and icebergs, hot springs and glaciers, to say nothing of the enchanting beauty of the fiords and the magnificent water-All these coupled with a falls? pleasant people nearly all of whom speak English and Danish in addition to their own language, and who are only too pleased to help the foreign visitor to enjoy his stay.

It is true that a fish-like smell pervades most of the little towns.

but this is to be expected where thousands of salted fish are drying in the sun. It is really a little point, as the towns, each with its Lutheran church and water-driven electric power-station, are soon left behind on one's journey inland.

This fish-drying is one of the greatest industries of the country. The fish are split open, cleaned and the heads removed, then they are well salted and laid out on the cobble-stones to dry in the sun. This takes many days, or even weeks, the fish being collected into great stacks every evening and covered with a waterproof sheet. When thoroughly cured the fish



YOUNG ICELAND.

The white substance on the ground is not snow but salt, which is strewn all over the fish-curing grounds.

is a stiff flat sheet about half an inch thick and incredibly tough. These sheets are then exported by the boat-load to Spain and in smaller quantities to England, where they are soaked, cooked and eaten—not used for repairing boots, as one is apt to conclude.

Journeys round the coast from village to village are most conveniently made by the coastal steamers, of which there is quite a good service, in addition to the vessels plying between Reykjavik and Copenhagen, Hamburg, Bergen, Hull or Leith. The lastnamed town is about nine hundred miles from Reykjavik, sailing via the Pentland Firth.

CAMPING IN ESSEX.

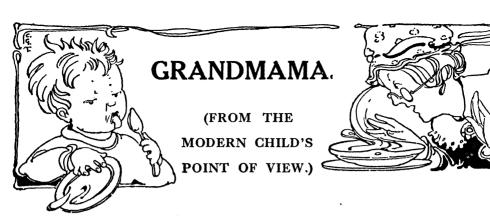
OF all my camps I like the most The nights in Essex spent, Where the tall trees have whispered dreams About my lonely tent.

Loughton and Epping, Langdon height, By Stour and Roding vale, In Totham woods, and where the mists The eastern walls enveil.

Under the stars camp-fires have shone At many journeys' end, But none have held for me the joys That Essex camps attend.

And so I swear, by all the gods—In sunshine or in rain,
To Essex I will take my tent
Now summer's come again.

LAURANCE M. WULCKO.



MY Grandmama was cross to-day
And really rather rude:
She would not let me out to play
Until I took my food.
'Twas horrid tapioca, and
I had to stuff it down—
I think I've got far more to stand
Than any boy in town.
I made a row—oh, can't I bawl!—
And everyone looked sad....
Oh, ain't you sorry for us all
When Grandmama is BAD?

Of course she is not always so—
You must not think she is——
Sometimes she's pretty good, I know,
To me and sister Liz.
She gives us sweets and toys and books,
And does not stamp and try
To frighten us with angry looks
And silly words like "fie!"
Then Liz is quiet as any mouse,
And I do all I should....
Oh, what a difference in the house
When Grandmama is GOOD!



THE MAN IN THE TRAIN 0

By A. C. BRAY

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SHERIE

THE huge Riviera express thundered and curved round the baked hills near Aubagne, plunged by La Ciotat and Bandol, and slowed into Toulon.

A girl in a second-class carriage looked out upon the crowded platform; upon the sailors of the French Navy, with the red tuft on the top of the beret; upon moustached commanders and lieutenants; upon ebony-faced Senegalese in khaki and red The admirable refreshment service the one thing in France that never goes wrong-was already pushing along wheeled stands bearing hot sweet coffee, little white grapes, cheap wine and cardboard "goblets" to drink it from.

She would have liked to buy something, for from sheer diffidence and lack of comprehension she had missed the early déjeuner which the Wagon-Lit people had served after Avignon.

A man in the far corner, who had got in at Marseilles, spoke.

"Excuse me, but do you want anything?" "Oh, are you English? Thank you so much. I would like a cup of coffee, and

perhaps something to eat.

He seemed to be along the corridor and down the steps before she had finished the

sentence.

"Monsieur," she heard him say, swiftly and politely, through the half-opened window, understanding a word here and there, "Un café et deux sandwichs; et puis, ces raisins sont à combien?"

"A huit francs, Monsieur."

"Alors, un demi-kilo . . . si vous voulez bien l'envelopper tout? Et le café, je puis le porter à cette dame-là? Je rapporterai la tasse, bien entendu. Il y a dix minutes d'arrêt, n'est-ce pas ?"

"C'est ça, Monsieur. Dix minutes." He handed over a couple of dirty notes, refusing some of the multitudinous nickel offered as change. A raised cap and a murmured "Merci bien, Monsieur," followed.

He walked carefully towards the window. balancing the coffee. "I'm afraid it's sugared, whether you like it or not," he said.

"I'm so glad to get it, anyway," she replied. He passed in the provisions, and moved away immediately towards the

paper-stall.

During the course of the innumerable whistles, horn-blowings, and yells of "En voiture," which began at least three minutes before the moment of departure, he approached, took cup and saucer, returned them to the polite functionary, and remounted. But the long gradient to Les Arcs was almost laboured over by the immense train before he entered the compartment again.

"I don't know how to thank you. I was almost famished," smiled the girl. you tell me how much——?"

"I do hope you won't spoil the first pleasure I've had for a week," he said.
"But I couldn't possibly—"

"Oh, yes, you could," he affirmed. "Now please do try." He had a curious, whimsical expression, which disarmed her.

"Well, really—— Perhaps I may offer you a cigarette, if that's any return?"

She held out a little silver case.

By this time they had taken stock of each other, an operation usually more prolonged with Anglo-Saxons.

She was carefully dressed, though an allnight sitting had slightly lessened her trimness. She was slim, almost boyish in figure, but not quite. She had fair, shingled hair; clear, grey-green eyes; a dainty nose and a pale complexion, on which there was barely a trace of the most innocent makeup. Altogether, what the newspapers of the Victorian age used to call a young woman of prepossessing appearance. She might be twenty-two. She had shed her cloche hat for the night, and had not yet resumed it.

He was lean, tall, dark, and pale—too pale. His mouth was long, with the flexible, mobile lips usually associated with the stage. His rather worn clothes were reminiscent of the "unobtrusive good tailoring" which enterprising firms advertise at from five and a half guineas. He was cleanshaven; and though a certain heaviness around the eyes indicated continuous travelling, he had somehow made a remarkably good toilet.

"You speak French wonderfully," she said. "I am supposed to have learnt at school, but I have hardly dared to say a word

since Calais."

"It isn't a very drastic test to get a cup of coffee," he smiled. "But I have to be fairly fluent for my job. I sell cars over here—or rather, I don't."

"Have you come far?"

"I have been working the centre and the West."

"I am afraid that doesn't tell me much."

"Tours, Limoges, Cahors, Montauban, Montpellier, and now along here. I came round through Brittany first, and then down to Nantes."

"It sounds like history lessons at school. Edward III, wasn't it? Or Henry V?"

"I've forgotten. But some of those towns are marvellous—the Middle Ages in everything that matters—including carbuying," he added with a wry smile.

"Not much doing?"

"I managed to get rid of the one I was driving, at second-hand rates. I'm going to report now to our branch at Monte Carlo, and take on again—— That is, if——"He stopped.

"I'm going to Monte Carlo too."

"Ah ?'

"I've got a job as secretary to Miss Fenton—Fenella Fenton."

"Not the novelist woman?"

"Yes. She lives there."
"Sure thing, I hope?"

"Two years certain, if we get on together."

"My word! We don't seem to have much chance against the women since——— I'm sure I beg your pardon. It slipped out." He coloured.

"Not a bit. But mine isn't a man's job,

is it? Sitting taking down dictation from a woman all day. You wouldn't like that, I hope?"

"No. But—well, I get pretty desperate at times. I've done every mortal thing to make good since 1918. Thought this would be a living, anyway. But, foreign cars in a highly-protected country, and with so many good ones of their own—Or probably it's my fault," he added. "Some of our fellows seem to make it go."

The girl looked at him steadily. She saw now the care and disappointment that lay beneath the naturally kindly, humorous expression; she noted the premature lines on the forehead and round the eyes, the streak of grey at the temples. All her maternal instinct rose within her, in no way diminished by the fact that the infant evoking it was a male; quite good-looking, and still young enough to be interesting.

She decided that he needed sympathy, and especially feminine sympathy. She encouraged him to talk. She introduced herself as Enid Moreham. His name was Strickland, and from a chance reference to family matters she soon deduced "John." He had gone almost straight from the O.T.C. of his school to the War. He had had the luck to get into the Gunners-"a gentleman's life to what the poor foot-sloggers had "-and had come through "almost untouched "-twelve weeks in hospital with a small matter of shell-shock, and a bit of shrapnel near the lung, having been apparently a pleasant holiday. After the Armistice he had spent his bounty and the little capital he had in trying to start a car agency of his own. It had failed from lack of resources. Since then, a rolling-stone existence, wearing his heart out. The plain, ordinary tale, in fact, of many thousands.

They were looking out over the roofs of St. Raphaël before either was aware that the train had emerged from behind the Maure hills, and was at the coast again.

"Now, you mustn't waste time talking to me," he said, "especially as it's your first time along here. This is the most wonderful train-ride in the world, they say, and I believe it."

And in truth the girl's eyes glistened at the almost uninterrupted vista of swooning loveliness which spread before them as soon as they swung clear of the little town. It was a day in late February, and she had left Dover in a cold, driving sleet from the north-east. Now it was like the most glowing August at home. A universal swim

of sunlight; a sea of the deepest sapphire, but for a wine-coloured patch here and there near the shore; palms, vines, loaded orange-trees, olive-groves innumerable. Past Bouloris, with magnificent yet discreet villas embowered in roses, golden mimosa, purple bougainvillea; Le Trayas on its miracle of a promontory, ending in rose-red rocks; Napoule and Théoule nestling beneath the Estérel; Cannes—not too impressive from the line; the splendid sweep of Golfe Juan; a duller stretch, like an entr'acte, in the Antibes region; the hill-perched palaces of Nice; incredible Villefranche; Eze, the most amazing station of all, nearly hidden in flowers and foliage, at the foot of the exhausting climb to the old Saracen town; round cape after cape, tunnelling now and then when the line found it impossible to squeeze any closer to the precipitous wall of the maritime Alps; and always the wondrous sun, always the sapphire sea.

For practically the whole run they stood in the corridor, untiring. The tinkling bell of the restaurant car flitted by from time to time, but they thought not of déjeuner. Only at Nice did Strickland judge prudent to descend for some more "sandwichs" and grapes; and these they ate with the comforting feeling that they were not only not missing a moment of the paradise without, but were saving their money.

At last the train drew up heavily in a covered station that appeared to be built out of the sea. Enid had barely time to observe the coroneted lamps. They were now in the Principality, and under the sway of His Highness.

More uniformed hotel porters, each more gaudy than the last, than she could have imagined the world to contain. A line of omnibuses, of great cars. A general air of discreet expedition. Blazing sunlight over all. Monte Carlo.

Strickland helped her with her baggage, and now stood beside her a moment at the door of the booking-office.

"I am to be met here. I can't thank you enough. It has made such a difference." She held out her hand. "And I do wish you luck."

"But it's not to be good-bye? You will allow me to see you again?" He looked at her very anxiously.

"I have no idea at all of what my duties will be. But the address is the Villa Morena."

Before he could say more a small, pretty, dark-haired woman approached.

"Miss Moreham?"

"Yes. Are you Miss Fenton?"

"Yes. Splendid. I got you at once. The car is waiting."

"But how kind of you to come yourself." Strickland, raising his hat, had departed, carrying his solitary suit-case up the slope through the Casino gardens before the purr of feminine greeting was fully under way. The little woman glanced after him. Enid put in a word of explanation.

"He looks quite a dear. But here is the car." A neat, moderate-sized saloon had drawn up from a little distance. The chauffeur, a young smiling Monégasque,

took the hand-luggage.

"Vous descendrez plus tard retirer les malles de Mademoiselle, François. Give him the baggage-ticket now, Miss Moreham. He will come for your trunks later on."

The car sped up the one approach possible for wheels in this almost vertical State. Enid now had opportunity to see something of what her employer was like. She was amazed to find her but little older than herself—possibly twenty-six or seven. There was little apparently to indicate the shrewdness of insight, the accurate psychology, the quiet yet strong dramatic sense which had made Fenella Fenton rank, after only her third book, very nearly one of the best-sellers. Enid's predominant impression was one of ready kindness, of entire absence of posing superiority. She felt drawn towards her as with few of her sex.

They reached a small villa lying off the road to Roquebrune. A smart maid opened the door. All within was marked by the simplest good taste, by a half-masculine scorn of flummery. The novelist took Enid to her room. It was plainly furnished, but it overlooked that ever-marvellous sea, with the humped rock of Monaco in the near distance, and the palm-shaded gardens of the Casino to the right. The afternoon was waning, and the gold and azure and emerald were tingeing with purple. Enid almost gasped with the rapture of it.

"Now you are dying for a bath and some tea. Hortense will see to everything for you. Come down and look for me when you are ready." She touched the bell and

disappeared.

Fenella left all question of work till the morning. She proposed a walk before dinner. They retraced the way the car had come. With Monte Carlo it is a case of one-way traffic, in the sense that if you leave the coast-wise thoroughfare you either

climb precipices or swim. They passed the bright, expensive shops and neared the hub of the town. Miss Fenton obviously knew many people, and often returned salutations. She had made a study of a comparatively unexplored literary field—the quieter life of this cosmopolitan resort; the comedy or tragedy of the existence of the residential colonels, majors, confidential bank-managers and their wives, rather than that of the transitory stratum of aristocracy.

got her copy more from the big public rooms than from the Sporting Club; the elderly lady risking her daily hundred francs interested her more than the frequenter of Ciro's or the Ambassadeurs.

They were soon on one of the flawless gravel walks maintained by the beneficent Administration.

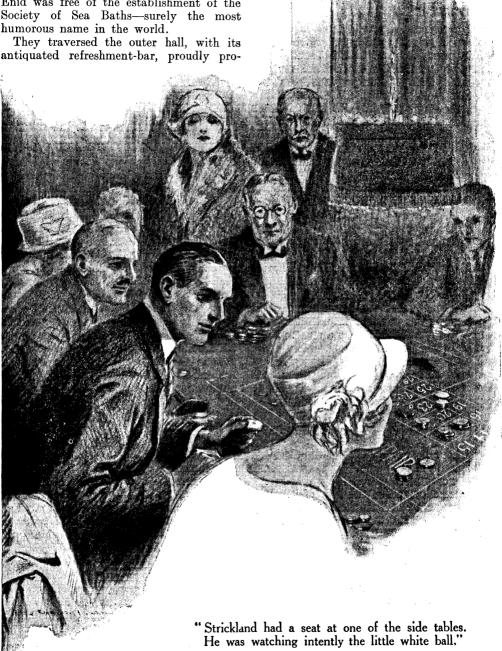


of Greek-Jew syndicates and crooks, and of cocottes from Paris or Buda-Pesth. She

"Would you like to see the Casino?" She smiled at the eagerness of the reply.

They went up the stately steps, and entered a stuffy den on the left. A few words to one of the black-coated gentlemen behind the counter, a farcical registration, and Enid was free of the establishment of the Society of Sea Baths—surely the most humorous name in the world.

room, with its closed windows, its heavy chandeliers, its walls bedecked with pictures



claiming its dependence upon the Café de Paris, and passed through the glass doors into the vast salle de roulette.

Enid gazed with interest upon the great

of very full-bosomed, very long-skirted, leg-of-mutton-sleeved ladies, engaged in such desperate pastimes as archery, croquet, and even side-saddle riding—the whole

doubtless thought very dashing and "Cyprian" in the eighteen-eighties. was surprised at the quietness and com-The strident formulæ, parative dulness. "Faites vos jeux, Messieurs." "Les jeux sont faits?" familiar to every tripper to Boulogne and Dieppe, originated here; but modern Monte Carlo either abandons them or suppresses them to practical inaudibility. And the substitution of counters for the glittering louis of former days robs the tables of most of their famed glitter. Moreover, the acceptance in these hard times of a ten-franc stake, with the franc at twopence, does not make for an atmosphere of wild and reckless romance. Still, to a new-comer it was all intriguing and rather wonderful.

They moved slowly round the three tables which were all that were in play at that hour, when Monte Carlo is taking its apéritif rather than gambling.

Suddenly Miss Fenton said, "There's your

man in the train!"

Enid was conscious of a quickened heart-beat—why, she could not have said.

"He hasn't lost much time."

Strickland had a seat at one of the side tables. He was watching intently the little white ball. At his side was a small pile of ten and twenty-franc counters. He did not see the women. He was playing every coup nervously and with obvious excitement. He tried the 36 to 1 chance of a single number—the 25—and lost. The dozens—and lost. The passe—and won. The impair—and won. Then again the 25—and lost.

"I hope he has something behind this."
"I'm afraid not much." Enid whispered
a few words as to what he had told her.

"Then I don't like the look of it. I've seen too much of this sort of thing." They continued to watch for some minutes. He was losing on the average—not much, but steadily. He never looked up, counting and fingering his resources between the coups.

Presently Miss Fenton indicated a return for dinner. As they passed out Enid glanced back for a moment. Strickland

was still absorbed in the play.

During the walk home, and the meal, the girl had little time to think of anything but her new surroundings, and of her employer's talk as to her work and life. But after the kind, shrewd novelist had said good night, Enid long saw before her, in the solitude of her room, a pale, drawn

face above a green table, and fingers clutching nervously a poor little heap of red and white counters.

The morning brought work—hard work. Miss Fenton was a quick thinker. She dictated fast: stopped: corrected: re-cast. Then cut out altogether, with perhaps an impatient word and gesture. She could judge things better in type; and Enid had frequently to fly to the machine and transcribe her shorthand while Fenella Fenton paced with swift steps the room or the garden—only to have the whole thing scrapped. However, by luncheon-time they had ten pages to their credit.

"My dear," said the writer, "you're splendid. You get me at once. I know how trying I am. Now go along and get

ready for food. I'm ravenous."

Were it not for their relations of employer and employed, Enid could have kissed her.

Afternoons at the Villa Morena were devoted to rest. After tea, work till dinner. It was a strenuous life, but the interest in watching character and incident develop in that strong brain, and the ready appreciation of her efforts, made it pleasurable.

The days passed. Acquaintanceship became friendship, almost intimate. Enid, not long free from the drudgery of a secretarial course, and later from an uncongenial post in the City, felt herself in Paradise. But, somehow, in the background there was always the picture of her man in the train, of his almost boyish help and confidences, of the silly, nervous gambling. She wondered if he would write, but nothing came; and Miss Fenton, who regarded the Casino merely as a source of occasional copy, did not propose another visit.

Callers came sometimes, whom the girl rarely saw. But one day Fenella announced that she had a man coming to dinner. Enid immediately indicated a great yearning for an evening alone, in order to get on with

imaginary arrears of typing.

"Even in Monte some of us respect the conventions," laughed the other. "No, Enid, I want you. You needn't be frightened. He's rather nice. It's Major West—West of the Service Quarterly. The military critic." Enid knew the name, no more.

She entirely agreed later as to the niceness of the guest, a distinguished-looking man in the late thirties. And it needed no very great feminine acumen to perceive before long that, courteous and charming in a soldierly way as he was to her, he found

his hostess very extraordinarily nice indeed. They sat informally over their cigarettes a while, and then Enid got up with decision. "Perhaps you will kindly excuse me, Miss Fenton. I really must finish that work."

Major West opened the door for her with

a smile of gratitude.

She went up to her room and made some pretence of typing. But before many minutes she looked out. It was a perfect Riviera night of the early spring of this enchanted coast. She felt restless. Very few people would be about at that distance from the gaieties of the town. She would go for a short walk—no harm could come to her in that bright moonlight, close to home. She slipped on a wrap, went quietly downstairs, and passed into the silent

She had barely taken a dozen steps when she started in alarm. A man was lurking in the shadow of the pillar at the corner of the garden. She stepped back, prepared to run into the house. Then he moved a little, as if swaying unsteadily, and the moonlight fell on his face. It was Strickland. She saw that he looked dreadful, ghastly.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded, in a low voice, but imperatively. She knew instinctively that it was no time for considerations of shortness of acquain-

tance.

No answer.

"What are you doing here?"

"I brought a note for you." Why?"

He held out a letter, with a strange, furtive movement. Enid approached a little towards Fenella's electric lamp standard at the gate, opened the envelope, and read. Her grey-green eyes flashed up.

"Give it to me!"

"I—I don't know . . ."

"You know perfectly well what I mean. Give it to me at once!"

A supreme moment of hesitation: the conflict of will and resolution with weakness and despair. Then his hand sought slowly the pocket of his worn overcoat. Something passed with a glint of moon and lamp. Enid flung it from her, with all her strength, down the steep, straggling slope of grass and undergrowth and rock which skirted the villa. It vanished into the shadow, falling dully.

"And now tell me all about it.

may walk with me a little way."

They turned away from the town. road was entirely deserted but for one of

the police guards of the "frontier" station not far away. He looked curiously at Strickland, and shot a swift glance at the girl, but passed on his patrol. Little by little the wretched story came out. On arrival he had reported at once to his firm. They were full of regrets, but had no further use for him. A tour of half France had resulted in nothing—dead loss, in fact. They quite recognised, etc., excellent War record, etc. Not quite suited to salesmanship, perhaps. Would do better on constructive side, no doubt, but unfortunately no vacancy. And had dismissed him with a gratuity of £25 . . . "really very decent of them," put in the English sense of fair-play within him, even at this juncture. Had half expected how it would be; but coming, as it did, within an hour of arriving . . . had hoped against it . . . and after nine years of trying. Then the idea of the Casino had come, as it naturally would; he would play carefully, of course; the amount of the gratuity was an obvious inspiration for luck . . . he would stake on 25, or combination connected with that number . . . would begin at once. He had lost; then won-once nearly doubling his capital—then lost. Almost his last fivefranc note. Had decided to end it. Owed hardly anything at his pension-sale of his clothes and suit-case would cover itleft his watch behind to make sure. She had been so awfully decent to him . . . wanted to say so . . . had hung about with his note . . . sort of good-bye . . .

He faltered yet more, then stopped. They stood still. She looked at him keenly. Then she took his hand. It was hot and shaking.

"You are not well," she said. With swift decision she made plans. "Come back with me."

Half stumbling, he obeyed. He seemed now fit for nothing but to obey.

At the Villa she ran in, leaving him at the gate. She found Miss Fenton still with her guest. A look of quite radiant happiness on her face changed to one of concern at Enid's obvious haste and emotion.

"My dear!" she began.

"Might I speak to you a minute? I'm

most dreadfully sorry, but-"

"Why, of course. You will excuse me, won't you, Harry?" The last word came a little hesitatingly. Even in the stress of the moment Enid noted it, as what woman would not?

Major West had begun a humorous objec-

tion, but, sensing something wrong, he merely rose and bowed in silence.

In a few rapid sentences Enid told everything, except the actual crisis. That was, and would be, their secret. He was very ill. He had lost his money, had been dismissed, and had come to bring a note saying that he was "leaving" immediately.

"But why on earth didn't you bring him in?" Fenella was down the steps and at the gate before the girl could reply to the kind-heartedly indignant protest.

They got Strickland into the room nearest to the door. The reaction upon his nerves was fast bringing on something like collapse. After a few moments they looked at each

other rather helplessly.

"I think this is a case for a man, Enid. I will get Major West." She went out. After a brief interval she returned, followed by the Major. His strong face looked stern and unpromising as he entered. Strange men taken ill at night at the doors of women's villas in Monte . . . odd, that . . . very queer people about . . . why hadn't the fellow gone to the hosp——?

"Strickland!"

The other made an attempt to rise. "It's wonderful to meet you, sir." He stammered a few words more, and sank back into the chair.

"My poor chap. I had no idea——This is Captain Strickland, Fenella. Served with me on the Somme. Got me out of one of the tightest things——But what the devil does this mean? You ought to be in bed, man. Where are you living?"

Strickland gave the name of his boarding-

house.

"You can't stay down in that hole." He paused. "Might I have the car, Fenella? I will get it out. François will be in bed. If you have any brandy, I don't think it will hurt him." He vanished in the direction of the garage.

The two women fussed about Strickland as women will with men they like—or love. Soon the car drew up without. West

entered.

"He's coming home with me for a bit. I'll bring the car back before long." He helped Strickland down the steps. Enid, standing a little behind Miss Fenton on the kerb, met the dark eyes of the nerveshattered man fixed on her in a look of deepest, unutterable gratitude... and something more. Then the car drove away in the moonlight, towards the Major's villa.

Left alone, they were not far from con-

fidences, in the somewhat tense atmosphere of the moment. The novelist revealed what was indeed manifest to Enid—that the secretary, ere very long, might have to be asked to accept a double responsibility, and to acquire facility in taking down "stuff" on tactics and strategy as well as society romance. Enid's congratulations were heartfelt.

"If anybody could deserve you, it is Major West, Miss Fenton."

"Why not 'Fenella'?"

The reserve of employer and employee ended in a warm embrace.

It was well past midnight when they heard the car. They met West at the door

"I've put him up all right, and got a doctor. He needs rest and care, that's about all it comes to. Nerves all to pieces, poor chap. What a time he's had! It's that shell-shock coming out again. So many of them. I've known it come to the worst before now—a revolver or a dose of something. Good job you came on him, Miss Moreham."

Enid's eyes were perfectly steady under

the unconscious "shot."

"One of the best, too. If you could have seen . . . but it's too late to talk War. I'll put the car in."

Enid slipped upstairs with a hurried good night. It was long before she fell asleep, but low voices were still talking when she lost consciousness. She smiled

at the happiness it meant.

The next day, and the next, brought little change. Major West soon had a competent English nurse installed, however, and she was able to tell Fenella and Enid, when they called, that the patient was quietly making progress. After a week she said he had been asking to see Miss Moreham, and that the doctor had given permission for a few minutes' visit. Major, it appeared, was away. He had told Fenella that urgent business had called him to London, and said that he would break off the engagement if she did not condescend to live in his humble home as much as in her own palace. It was arranged, therefore, that they should lunch one day in the humble home—a gem of a villa set back from the road in a wonderful garden. After a meal in which the cook surpassed himself, Enid was summoned to the bed-

Strickland lay near an open window giving upon the garden, the sea, and the beautiful promontory of Cap Martin. He was paler than ever, but calm, and plainly at rest in mind and body.

"What can I say to thank you?" he said, when the nurse had gone.

"Hush. Nurse said you were not to talk."

"There is just one thing. These kind, good people—do—do they know?"



"No one knows but you and me-nor ever will."

He sank back on his pillow with a sigh.

"Thank God-and you."

No more was said till the nurse reappeared. "One more minute," she said, making an excuse to fetch something from the table. When she had again gone Strickland suddenly raised Enid's hand to his lips and kissed it fervently, passionately.

Her woman's heart moved within her. A moment's hesitation, and she withdrew her hand very gently. And, stooping over

him, kissed his lined brow.

"Come along now, Miss Moreham." He watched her go, a light of new understanding

and of great new hope in his eyes.

The Major was gone more than ten days. When he returned, Strickland had reached the stage of being allowed to sit for an hour in the garden each morning. Major found him thus when he drove up in a taxi from the station. He had wired asking Fenella and Enid to join him at luncheon, and they were both by the side of the invalid's chair. After a greeting with Fenella, during which Strickland and Enid became absorbed with the scenery, he said in his bluff way, "I think you're keen on motor engineering, Strickland?"

"It's the one thing I really know something about, sir. The people I was with knew it, and would have ____ " The Major

cut him short.

"Don't I know what you did with our transport? What they meant giving you a silly bagman's job . . . perfect rubbish. Well. I've been running about in Town a bit, and . . . the long and the short of it is that there's a job going to start a new branch of the Mandeville works . . . sound lot, you know . . . in the West-Devonshire way. Want to develop the sale in that direction-nothing like being on the spot apparently. It's yours if you'd like it. Begin three months from now. You'll be fit enough then."

First paler, then a flush, then pale again. A great effort to control the voice. At last, a stammered phrase.

"God knows—I can't—I don't—all I owe you—I——"

"Ha, ha! Very funny. Let's add it up. Debit Strickland-fortnight's board and lodging, to be continued; two damned stuffy journeys (sorry, Fenella; sorry, Miss Moreham) in a wagon-lit; two crossings, one horrible; four days' eating stodgy Club food and talking, mostly to idiots. Debit West—one life, extremely pleasant, and soon," with a glance in the obvious direction, "soon to be Heaven. . . . I think I score, Strickland."

In honour of the occasion Strickland was permitted to sit up to luncheon, as the Major put it, taking his chicken and toast in his chair near the table. And later he was put back in the garden for a strictly limited half-hour. The Major and Fenella lingered within. Enid left them and sat beside him.

It came from his heart and his lips almost in an instant

"Enid, Enid, dearest. Dear, you know, don't you? You must know. I can't think of living without you. You are meant for me, dear; you must be. You were sent that night-sent. Darling, you saved me from myself. I've a splendid new chance now. I don't think I quite had one before. Help me to take it, Enid. Dearest, may I hope—may I?"

"My poor dear boy. Yes."

Enid had a further spell of transcribing and typing of exclusively fictional work, terminating with the functions of only bridesmaid at the quietest of weddings for some time in the neighbourhood. Followed a holiday, with life divided between the two villas. Next, a considerable apprenticeship in the disentanglement of advanced military theory from choleric interjection upon the idiocy of opposing authorities and critics. And then a period when, with two affectionate but insistent employers, and with long and extremely important private correspondence from home, she knew not which way to turn.

They saw her off one fine morning, loaded with the finest flowers of the garden. And as the immense engine gave its preliminary snort a soldierly voice said, in what was intended to be a whisper:

"No more Men in the Train, eh,

Enid ? "





NORTH COUNTRY LOCAL: Got owt?

HOLIDAY ANGLER: Why, hang it all, boy! I haven't fallen in yet!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

HOW TO MAKE A HOLIDAY FILM

By W. E. Richards

 \mathbf{T}^{O} make a holiday film you need (a) a baby film camera, and (b) a holiday. These cost practically nothing if father is approached in the right spirit. The family will insist on a holiday, anyway, and a little good behaviour when your birthday comes in sight should do the rest.

The first essential for a good film is Ambition. Without it you will only secure a picture of Father Riding a Donkey on the Sands, and Smith Mi, you will remember, filmed that subject last year. I am not sure that you wouldn't be infringing his copyright if you used the same plot again, even if your father fell off rather differently. With ambition you should be able to direct a film which will make D. W. Griffiths feel like a beginner.

Every film requires a Star. There is no difficulty in finding a star. Every nice girl will smile her hardest at you and tempt you with bars of chocolate and éclairs until you have chosen your cast. After this, of course, you will be cut dead. Do not therefore announce your decision until the last moment. Hollywood, they say, is like that.

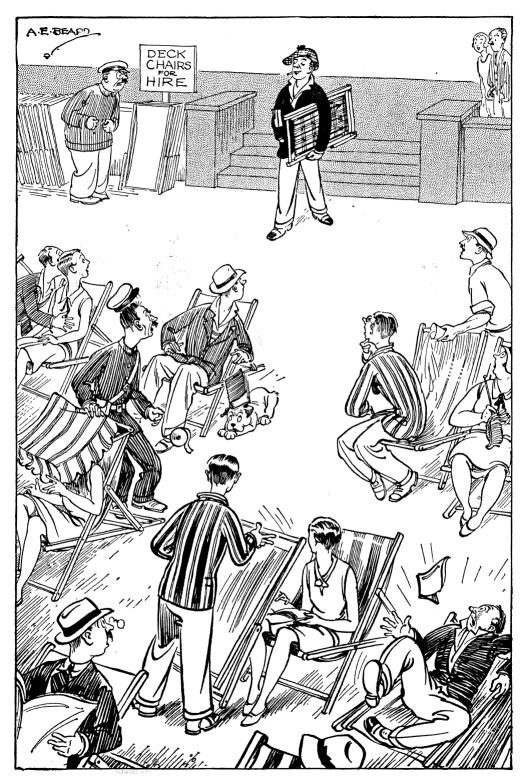
You need not spend nearly so much as D. W. Griffiths on your set. He would spend a million

dollars before he began to shoot, and you probably only possess ninepence. Do not be dismayed by this. Your principals will provide their own costumes, and the sea, which will form the background of your set, is provided free of charge by the municipality of Shingle-cum-Sand (send 2d. postage for brochure).

Now you require a *Scenario*. This is the plot, written out in full detail. You may find writing a scenario is rather a fag, especially if the weather is fine, but it must be done, unless you are content to film Father Riding on a Donkey.

So start with a clean exercise book and write boldly on the first page, "Saved from the Deep in Six Reels." Inspiration comes to the best authors late at night, and as the authorities have pronounced views on bedtime, it will be wise to take the book to bed. Do not use the one-and-threepenny fountain-pen Rogers Secundus swapped you for your white mice or you will be found out and the scenario confiscated.

Just when Brian (he's your hero) has rescued Doris (she's your star) from a watery grave and is imprinting a kiss on her cold lips, the exercise book will be filled. In this emergency, you should slip quietly downstairs to the drawing-room and



HEROES OF MODERN LIFE.

The man who brings his own deck-chair on the beach.

borrow the visitors' book from the writing-desk. There are always a few empty pages in the visitors' book. This may give your story a curious twist, making it read:

"Brian seizes the half-drowned form of Doris and bears her tenderly to the shore.

Colonel and Mrs. Maple-Durham much enjoyed

their stay at Marine View.

He stoops over the prostrate form and imprints a tender kiss on her lips.

I shall certainly come here again. I find it so

The reckoning must be paid, he sighed.

Your charges at Marine View are so moderate."

This seems a little complicated, but you will know what it means.

Rehearse thoroughly. Remember that film costs money, and you must not expose it until you are sure the actors know their parts. Your company will be bored stiff doing the same thing over and over again. All except Brian and Doris, who have the only kiss in the plot. They don't really need a rehearsal, because they put in a lot of private practice down at the Cove. But you must be firm with the others. They will complain that they're blue with cold, but that doesn't matter. Blue doesn't photograph. anyway. They will come out white on the film.

Remember that the producer isn't tied to the scenario. In fact, a good producer never looks at the thing. If he thinks of a new stunt, he just puts it in as he goes along. At this stage you



THE IDENTIFICATION PARADE.

HUSBAND (as wife enters in new fancy dress): Hello, dear! Now, half a moment; don't tell me what you represent. Let me have a guess.

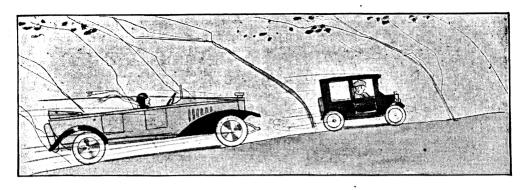
Then you will require Sub-Titles. These are terse and pithy sentences, like "Came the Dawn," which are flashed on the screen so that members of the audience can read them aloud to show they are not really holding hands with their neighbours, but are taking an intelligent interest in the story.

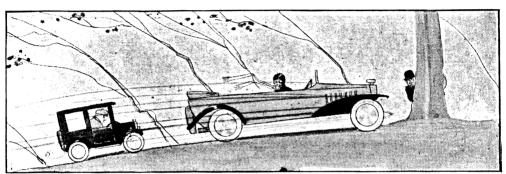
You now cease being an Author and become the Producer. For this you require a slouch hat, a piece of chewing-gum and a megaphone. must have the megaphone because the producer is a Big Noise. You can say exactly what you like to the company (if you can manage your chewing-gum satisfactorily), but you should bear in mind that Hollywood stars are permitted by law to have temperaments, and if you speak too severely to Doris she may box your ears.

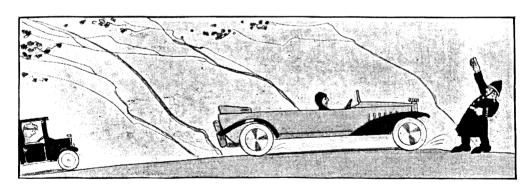
will probably decide that the rescue scene would be more effective if Brian dived from the end of the pier. In that case, order him to do it. He will probably retort that in Hollywood a Double is kept for dangerous work of this kind,

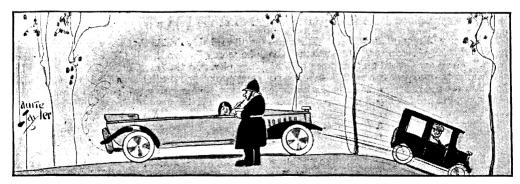
You will have no difficulty in obtaining a Double to dive off the end of the pier. But he will probably go on to rescue Doris and imprint a tender kiss on her lips. It will be difficult to make the Double understand that his business begins and ends with the high dive off the pier. In that event, Brian is bound to see red.

Should they settle the dispute in the good oldfashioned way, do not interfere. Let them fight. This is the chance you have been waiting for. Raise the camera and shoot. Smith Mi never got a picture like this.









THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.





Edward?

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The Mindsor Magazine.

No. 417.

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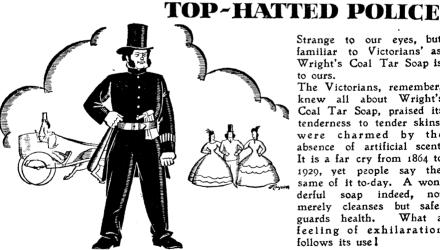
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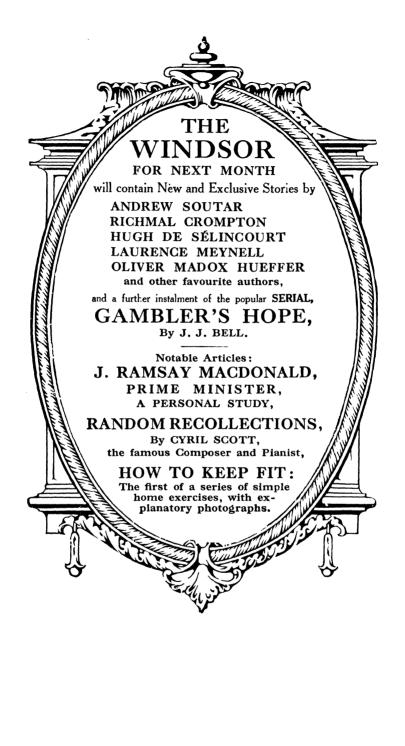


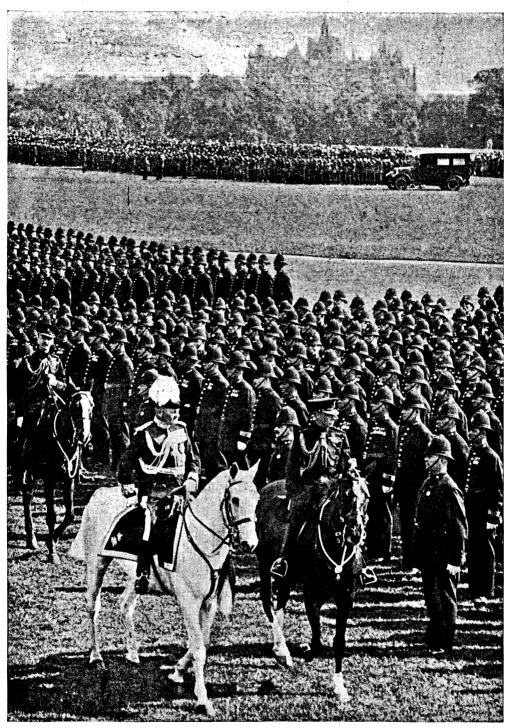
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[Central News,

THE PRINCE AND THE POLICE.

H.R.H., with Viscount Byng of Vimy, passing down the line at a Review of 12,000 members of the Metropolitan Police in celebration of the Centenary of the Force.

Edward P.

A NEW AND INTIMATE LIFE STORY
OF

H.R.H.the PRINCE OF WALES

EVELYN GRAHAM

Continued from last month's issue.

XII.

H.R.H. AS STATESMAN.

TATESMAN, some jaundiced cynic has not inaptly said, is journalese for politician, and politician is journalese for public rogue. It is one of the penalties we pay for our system of government and for our Press that such a definition should be so near the truth. The alternations of office in party politics, the struggle for power, the dependence on slogans, combine too often to make the politician one who has to strive for himself before his party and for his party before the State. There are many honourable exceptions of course. But it is a defect that is inextricably bound up with the system, and one that has taken from the word "statesman" the fine, self-sacrificing meaning that it should have. Among members of the Royal Family, and probably among members of the Royal Family alone, can there be statesmanship unbiased by personal motives. The Throne owes no allegiance to any party and all parties owe allegiance to the Throne. It is thus unbiased in its policy and there is

nothing to deflect it from its aims for the prosperity and comfort of the people of the Empire.

Thus when I refer to the Prince of Wales as a statesman, I mean the word to be taken, not in the journalistic sense to which it has been reduced, but in its finer sense of one who works, and works successfully, for the peace and prosperity of the British Empire at home and abroad.

The Prince of Wales comes well into this definition. It is not that he has personally carried out any measures of reform, drafted any bills, drawn up any treaties, or come to great decisions on the bank rate or the gold standard. Neither the Royal tradition nor his own Royal training would allow him to do any of these; they are tasks for politicians, diplomats and bankers. What does constitute his claim to be a statesman is the way in which he has always been ready to throw his prestige into the balance for a course of action that he believes to be right.

It is a little difficult for the ordinary Englishman to realise the prestige that Royal blood gives to the Prince in differ-

(All rights reserved)

387 E E

ent parts of the world. The man at home is used to opening the morning paper, propping it against the coffee-pot, and reading the doings of the day before. "My dear," he says to his wife, or maybe only to himself, "the Prince of Wales opened a hospital in Streatham yesterday." again: "My dear, the Prince of Wales held a levee at St. James's yesterday." Or it may be that the Prince of Wales has been hunting or has given up hunting, has been down a mine, or up in an aeroplane, inspected a factory or some Boy Scouts, talked to St. Dunstan's men, or presented medals at Dartmouth. In fact he has been doing the hundreds of things that he does in the year, and every one of them is served up with the coffee in the morning. We have, indeed, got so used to the Prince of Wales as one of the normal and more pleasant features of English life, that we tend to take him for granted and to assume that he is doing the right thing. Therein lies part of his claim to statesmanship. assume that he is doing the right thing, and as a result we are prejudiced in favour of everything he does. If the Prince of Wales makes a speech appealing for a charity such as the miners' relief fund, the response is instantaneous and remarkable. If he visits those distressed areas in person, public interest and sympathy are redoubled and the distressed areas benefit again in pocket. Yet all the time the majority of people do not realise how much the Prince of Wales has to do with it all. It all seems so natural that he should make a speech or visit the place—so much a part of the daily life of England. It is almost unconsciously that the British public follows the course of action which he has directly or indirectly suggested.

If the ordinary Englishman who has never seen the Prince of Wales thus takes him for granted without realising his influence, it is much more difficult for those of us who are so fortunate as to know him personally to realise that he is anything more than an ordinary friend. For it is part of his charm that he has more friends than acquaintances, and the rest of his charm that to his friends he is a man and not a Prince. It was for this reason that when, several years ago, I conceived the plan of writing a book about His Royal Highness, I determined that wherever I went on the voyage round the world that I was at that time undertaking, I would endeavour to find out from all I met their opinion of the Prince of Wales, so that I might obtain a symposium of views from people who had not the disability of knowing him. From the answers to my questions all over the Empire, in the United States, and in parts of Europe, I realised the enormous influence for the peace and prosperity of this country that the Prince had exercised, and I determined that, whatever else had perforce to be omitted, a chapter of my book should be devoted to impressing this fact upon my readers.

I remember talking to a Canadian farmer at Nipigon; where I was staying for a few days to see the scenery and to shoot wild duck on the banks of the Nipigon River. This was in 1924, five years after the Prince of Wales had visited the neighbourhood. My farmer acquaintance, whose firm grey eyes shone quizzically out of a sunburnt face, as sharp and rugged as if it had been hewn out of the sandstone rock, was chaffing me about the British system of hereditary "Why," he said, "you get a boneheaded jackanapes, with no more brains than my mule here, who pops in to dinner before Thomas Hardy, or Earl Haig, just because he's the son of a duke, when he's not really fit to black their boots." admitted that there was something in what he said, and asked him why, if Canada felt like that about it, the Prince of Wales had such an enthusiastic reception at Nipigon when he was there five years before. "Aw," he replied, "that's another matter entirely. That young man is worth his place, and darn well ought to go in before Thomas Hardy and Lord Haig. I've got no quarrel with him, and I don't mind telling you that he is one of the biggest things that keeps Canada in the British Empire. I shook hands with him myself!"

That is the keynote of Canada's opinion of the Prince of Wales—an air of intimate relationship, which is exemplified by a conversation a young fellow I knew just down from Oxford had with the boots of a hotel in Montreal. "Say," said Boots, "you're English, aren't you? Do you know the King of England?" The Oxford man had to admit that he had not that honour. "Then I suppose you know the Prince of Wales?" Again the Oxford man could not claim the distinction. "Nor the Duke of York?" Again the answer was no. "Then of course you would know Prince George—he would be more your age." Once more the embarrassed Englishman was obliged to admit that he did not.

"Say, you do belong to the upper classes, don't you?" said the disgusted Boots.

I remember again out at Oudtschoorn, in the Veldt of South Africa, where republicanism is very strong, I was talking to an old Dutch hand on one of the ostrich farms for which the district is noted. Here again town at the head of a commando at the gallop, when he might have come in a comfortable car. He may be a young fool, but he is the kind of fool I like." And the old fellow expectorated over his shoulder, as if he would say: "My mind's made up."

As a third example of the opinion of His



[Alfieri.

THE CARES OF GOLF MAY BE AS GREAT AS THOSE OF STATE.

I adopted my accustomed and to my friends rather tiresome habit of asking what he thought of the Prince of Wales. "I don't care tuppence about the British Empire," he said "one way or t'other; but I do like the Prince of Wales. The young fellow had the guts to visit this

Royal Highness abroad, I remember a short time ago in Paris, when the whole of France was mourning the death of Marshal Foch, the stalwart Christian soldier who led the Allied armies to victory after the most trying period of the War, when our backs were to the wall, and fear was prickling



[Central News.

H.R.H. TAKES A SPELL AS DRIVER OF ONE OF THE HUGE C.P.R. ENGINES IN CANADA.

down our spines. It was the morning of the day after the Prince of Wales had announced his intention of following the Marshal's bier in person as representative of his father. The French papers, with the exception of Humanilé, were filled with praise for this "Beau Geste" on the part of Great Britain. In the Metro railway that morning I heard on every side, from workmen, clerks and midinettes, nothing but admiration for "Le Prince de Galle," and at luncheon I was seated next to an old lady whose republican sympathies were tempered by a Royalist tradition, who sighed to me: "What a tragedy for France that we have no Dauphin!"

Finally, I may give two examples at

home, and we shall have enough material to draw a moral. It was outside the entrance to the ground at Twickenham on the day of the England-Scot-Rugby land football match. There were three young men in the crowd waiting for the gates to open. One was, I suppose, a clerk from the city, another probably a shop assistant, while the third appeared to be an artisan. With a catholicity of interest engendered by our educational system they talked about a variety of things. About D.O.R.A., of which the artisan was in favour, assuring his companions that the majority of the workers were at his back. while admitting also the peculiar anomalies of the law. They talked about the Prayer Book, on which opinion was divided and no speaker seemed authoritative. They talked about politics. One was a Conservative and expected a Tory majority at the election because the Conservatives had polled most votes in by-elections. Another was Liberal and expected a Liberal majority for reasons unspecified. The third was Labour and expected a Labour majority on grounds similar to those of the Liberal. They talked about the "I wish I Prince of Wales. had his job," said one; and the

other two started off in protest together. Speaking simultaneously, they so browbeat speaker number one that he was fain to consent to being beaten, and withdrew his expressed desire to be Prince of Wales. "He is the hardest worked man in the country and a dam' good fellow," they agreed.

Lastly, I took advantage of my presence at the Oxford Union Society's debate to get into conversation with an officer of the Club. He had previously been pointed out to me as the most cynical young man in Oxford. I asked this young undergraduate what he thought about the Prince of Wales. He replied: "Up till now I have avoided thinking about him, but so

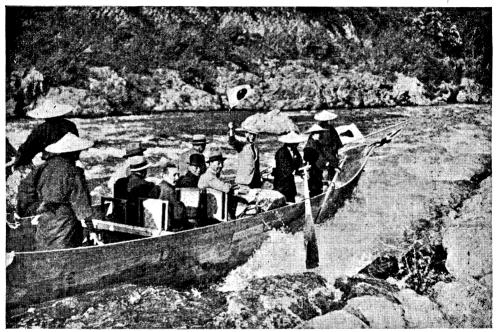


[Central News.

DIVINE SERVICE ON BOARD THE "RENOWN."

far as I can make out he seems a decent sort of man, and seeing that since Victoria died the public and Press think that the Divine Right of Kings means that the King can do no wrong—a curious confusion of theology and law—he seems to be infallible. I resent very much the suggestion that he is infallible. It is quite time that we realised that although there may be 'a divinity doth hedge a King,' it is not necessary to maintain this hedge for educated people. As to his uses, I grant you quite willingly that he is quite essential for the upkeep of the British Empire as commercial traveller, as ambassador of

already been recorded, it is worth dwelling upon them here. His doings at home have always been characterised by that painstaking tact which is generally called personal charm, but which, as a matter of fact, is something deeper. Ever since David was a small child it had been instilled into him to say the right thing in the right place: how to address an alderman, or—more difficult still—how to listen to an alderman addressing him; for the former can be prompted by his staff, the latter cannot. How to be affable to ex-Servicemen, to remember faces and facts. How to shake hands with Western Canadians, Australian



[Central News.

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS ON A FAMOUS JAPANESE RIVER.

Empire, and as a little bit of pageantry, the glint of scarlet and gold in the fog of normal existence. As such, I think he plays his part quite admirably, and is a sine qua non of Empire." Even this longwinded young man had realised in his peculiar way, as the Canadian farmer, the Boer, the "grand dame," the clerk, the artisan, and the shop assistant had in theirs, that the Prince of Wales is an asset to the British nation.

It is difficult to over-estimate the value of the work of this description done by His Royal Highness, and even at the risk of repeating some of the actions that have farm-hands, democratic Americans, generals, admirals, and privates, without wincing and without withdrawing. Every one of these things is a small part of the princely training in itself, but when all is added together it constitutes statesmanship. For it induces a feeling throughout the Empire that the system of Government must be right where not only can a cat look at a king, but a bricklayer can shake hands with the Prince of Wales.

It is, however, largely in problems of distress, where national sentiment, or even sentimentality, is aroused, that His Royal Highness reaches his full value. During the War he immediately identified himself with the War charities, issuing an appeal in his own name for their support, and the lustre which his name lent to the appeal accounted not only for many thousands of pounds on the list, but for that general feeling of corporate effort among the community that is so essential for national morale in war-time.

To put in the fewest words the statesmanlike characteristics and duties of the Prince of Wales, one would say that he arouses the national conscience and interprets the national sympathy. If any politician could do that as successfully, not only would he always be in power, but he would earn, and truly earn, the title of statesman.

Another part of the Prince's duties as a statesman is the maintenance of amicable relations with foreign powers. Everyone remembers how successfully he managed to do that in the United States; and the enthusiasm with which he is mentioned in France is sufficient indication of a similar success with our neighbours across the Channel.

Having thus handed a well-merited bouquet to His Royal Highness, it is only fair to endeavour to assess how much is due to him as a man and how much as a Prince. And here I think a great deal of credit must be accorded to his staff. It is, of course, true that the Prince has his personal sympathy aroused for many of the causes he espouses. He has, for example, a very strong feeling of personal loyalty to ex-Service men, for he considers himself to be one of them. He has, too, in common with every other intelligent Englishman, a very deep sympathy for the unfortunate miners whom economic circumstances have flung into poverty and distress. But the way in which that sympathy is manifested is due largely to his staff and to his train-To be a Prince nowadays is a very specialised career, for which many arduous years of training are required; but even with this the right material is necessary. In Edward, Prince of Wales, as also in other less exalted men, the right material is present, and has been welded by training into a strong and statesmanlike whole.

I say statesmanlike, for wherever I have travelled I have heard nothing but good reports of him, and wherever he has been, or has been read about, the people are more in sympathy with the Prince, with England and the whole Empire. "After all," as an American once said to me, "there is something in this Prince business."

XIII.

A "NIGHT OUT" WITH H.R.H.

T was Mr. Bernard Shaw who had the courage to point out that the chief advantage of the amelioration of social conditions for all classes was the increased leisure it gave them. A generation brought up on the healthy deification of industry in Smiles's Self-Help took a long time before it could acknowledge this fact openly, but for many years the signs have not been lacking. It is not without significance to note in the daily papers the proportion of the space devoted to amusements, and when one has realised the amount of attention devoted to sport, to the police courts which are the playground of the masses, and to the "snobbery column," about the doings of "titled ladies and night-club habituées," it is not difficult to understand the reason for a question I must have been asked dozens of times by different people in various parts of the world. "What is it," they say, "that the Prince of Wales does in his leisure moments?"

If I were to follow the traditional policy of most admirers of the Prince I should retort courteously that the Prince of Wales has no leisure moments, and we should depart upon our several ways feeling tremendously loyal. But such an answer would, of course, be untrue. The time H.R.H. devotes to hunting, to riding in point-to-points, to squash racquets, or to watching a Rugby International, are his leisure moments, and he enjoys them as much as anyone else. The only justification for such an answer is that wherever H.R.H. goes the limelight is flooded on to him, and even in Leicestershire, where he is a sight that has lost the glamour of novelty, there will be crowds of people at every meet who will nudge each other, and, pointing to some strange and nervous young man from Malton, will say: "Gosh, there's the Prince of Wales!" Whether they mistake his identity, as so frequently occurs, or not, they are looking out for the Prince, and he is conscious of their curiosity. Fortunately, thirty-five years of being closely inspected by all onlookers has so accustomed him to it that he does not notice them, except to be automatically gracious, and his leisure is consequently but little disturbed.

I remember once some years ago a great friend of mine joined the Prince's staff for the first time. I met him, a few days after

his initiation, in our club, and I asked him what he thought of his new tasks. "Well," he said, "the Prince is a splendid chap, and there is no one easier to work with. He is most considerate that we should not have too much to do, and at the same time, while we are at work, we get a tremendous lot done. But what I do not like is going out with him on any business. The first time I went out people stared at me so much and nudged each other when I passed that I thought I must have inadvertently come out without my trousers. It was not until I remembered that I was walking next to the Prince of Wales, and realised that it was he who was being looked at that I felt comfortable at all." When I met my friend again about a month later, I asked him if he still felt uncomfortable when out with the Prince. "Good Lord, no," he said. "I got used to that after a couple of weeks." Now when we realise that the Prince himself has been getting used to it for over thirty years, it seems pretty clear that it does not affect his enjoyment much. Neither does it to any great extent curtail his activities. What does curtail them is the amount of work he has to do. When that programme is done, he spends his time much as any other young man about town would.

In view of the amount of newspaper space devoted to the doings and amusements of people whom the majority of readers have never seen, particularly their attendance at theatres, dances, and nightclubs, it may perhaps be of interest to chronicle a typical "night out" in the life of the Prince. Members of his staff have often told me, and I have frequently seen for myself, how much he enjoys these little jaunts. Many a time have I been at a musical comedy and seen the Prince sitting either in the box or in the stalls, drinking in with eye and ear the entertainment provided; and many a time have I seen him at dances or at night clubs footing it with the best. "He is," said one of his prettiest partners to me at a private dance where His Royal Highness was present, "a much better dancer than you are." Now although nothing could be greater than my loyalty to or my admiration for the heir to the throne, I did feel that this was a remark that might have been left unsaid, so I offered to sit out the rest of the dance with her if my dancing did not come up to the proper high standard. "Oh no! she said, "you dance all right, old thing. It is only that he dances exceptionally well." After this amende honorable we went on dancing. "What does he talk about?" I asked, following on my train of thought. "Oh, nothing in particular," she answered; "he is just like any other man so far as talking is concerned. Only he dances better."

It is seldom that the Prince's engagements end before dinner-time—a meal which he takes whenever possible just alone with his staff in his own suite. The small and pleasant panelled dining-room is on the ground floor of his apartments, through a door leading off from the waiting-room where callers are entertained. It is a cosy little room, and the carefully shaded electric lights cast restful shadows on the panels, whose rich brown colouring lends a touch of warmth to the room. Across the long, beautifully proportioned windows the curtains shut off the distant glow of the street lamps not so very far outside, and the room presents such an air of homely comfort that you might go far before you found

Here the Prince of Wales will be having his dinner, probably with his secretary and some other member of the staff. It is quite a simple meal-no gargantuan banquet—that is before them. A little soup, some fish, a joint or bird, and a sweet: much as a thousand other of the fairly well-to-do are eating all over London at the same time. If there is anything to remark, it is the absence of starchy foods, for the Prince is very keen on his gospel of physical fitness, and avoids anything that might interfere with the sureness of his eye in squash racquets, or the firmness of his seat in the hunting-field. The conversation at dinner would be very pleasing to anyone who could hear it. His Royal Highness is on the most intimate terms with his staff, and their talk is not fettered by any consciousness of social station. It is just a question of man to man, and even of a younger man to an older man, for H.R.H. defers to the opinions of his staff on matters in which they have had more experience. It is also his very strict rule on these occasions, when he is devoting an evening to amusement, that business shall be entirely banished from the dinner-table. They must not talk "shop." As a matter of fact, they do very often talk shop, but in a way that would be a delightful revelation to many of the people whom the Prince has met officially during the day, for after "business hours" he has a very charming sense of humour, and can extract a great deal of retrospective fun from his doings of the last twelve hours.

Though nothing could be more cordial than the relations between the Prince and his people, I believe there would be much less restraint and no less dignity at ceremonies in which he takes part if other folk realised that H.R.H. has a very keen sense of humour. Without respecting him any the less as a prince they would like him more as a man. Probably no one on this earth has met more mayors and aldermen than the Prince of Wales. If I had met onetenth of the number, I should be heartily sick of the race, seeing them only in their official capacities. But the Prince has a singularly acute eye for the man behind the alderman, and can form a very true value of him. But if, as occasionally happens, he meets during the day some functionary dressed up in peacock's feathers and glorying in his petty power who has an exaggerated view of the dignity of his office, it would do that man good to hear the kindly humorous comments that are made on him at the Prince's dinner-table in the evening.

Dinner over, coffee is served nearly always in that comfortable private sitting-room of the Prince upstairs: the sanctum into which even his staff do not venture without a specific invitation, which is, however, frequently given. Here the Prince will light a pipe-before it is time to start for the theatre. This is his favourite time for hearing the latest records on the gramophone. He has a very fine machine, and an excellent collection of records, which he keeps very up to date, for he has a great enthusiasm for jazz. If he is going to a musical comedy that evening he always makes a point of playing over the best tunes in the piece on the gramophone first, for he has found, as many other people have, that nothing improves a musical comedy so much as knowing the music beforehand.

Though his first choice is for modern music, the Prince has also a considerable liking for some of the older musicians, showing special preference for Schubert and Chopin; and if any orchestra when H.R.H. is present wishes to earn his especial gratitude, I would recommend them to play one of Chopin's Nocturnes, or particularly the exquisite 24th Prelude.

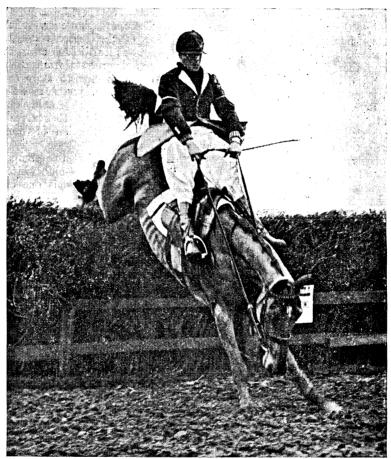
At about ten minutes to eight, the Prince's car is at the porch, and after knocking

out the embers of his pipe on the hearth, he descends to the door and gets into the car, his opera hat balanced at the carefree angle he has made so fashionable. Punctually, a couple of minutes before the curtain is to rise, the car arrives at the theatre, where a piece of red drugget and a bowing manager are waiting as a preliminary to conducting him to his seat. It is not always that H.R.H. is seated in the royal box: quite often he books a couple of stalls just like anyone else and leaves his neighbours entirely to chance. But whether he sits in the royal box or in the stalls, he always makes a special point of being punctual. He considers that to be late even at a musical comedy is discourteous alike to the audience who are sufficiently polite to be punctual and-far more important—to the actors who are doing their best at a very trying task. One of the few times that I have heard him really indignant was when he was sitting in the stalls at a very fine straight play. About half-way through the first act a number of people came in laughing and talking and pushed their way through into their seats in the second row, interfering with the attention of everyone behind, and, worst of all, embarrassing a nervous youngster who was getting his first chance in a speaking part. The Prince turned angrily to his equerry. "If I can get here in time," he said, "I do not see why these people cannot as well. It is an insult to every person in the theatre."

Generally, however, when the Prince is present these little contretemps do not occur, for everyone is there early to see him arrive. His favourite dramatic fare is musical comedy, and there are very few successful musical comedies produced in London that he does not see at least once. He is quite a connoisseur in these plays and for them has a highly developed critical faculty and an extraordinary memory for past successes. Whenever he meets a musical comedy star off the stage, he readily remembers the plays in which he has seen her and they soon fall into an easy chat about theatrical matters. A well-known musical comedy actress who has recently married once told me that the Prince of Wales was one of the most kindly as well as one of the most acute critics she had ever met. "We are quite used," she said ingenuously, with one of those charming smiles that made her fortune on the stage, "to fulsome flattery. It is a pleasant change to find someone who can appreciate the delicacies of one's art. One feels the value of the compliment so much more from the Prince of Wales than from anyone else."

It must not, however, be thought that H.R.H. is interested only in musical comedy, for that, whatever subtlety of criticism we allowed him, would be to underrate his mentality. He is very fond also of a good, straight play, and even at times a good

After the theatre the Prince may go on to a night club. The car again arrives at the end of the red drugget, the manager again appears to offer his respects and to receive his meed of gracious thanks, and the car purrs off through the crowd of sight-seers waiting for a glimpse of the heir to the throne, and disappears into the crowd of home-going limousines and taxis. But His Royal Highness is not bound for home



[Illustrations Bureau.

THE LAST JUMP IN A POINT-TO-POINT RACE OF THE WELSH GUARDS.

crook play, which is not very difficult to understand when one knows that one of his favourite authors is Mr. Edgar Wallace. Up in his sitting-room at St. James's, there is one whole bookshelf filled with the works of this writer, and often when he spends one of his not very frequent evenings at home alone, it will be in the company of his dog "Cora," his pipe, his gramophone, and the latest Edgar Wallace thriller.

yet. It could hardly be considered a full evening's amusement if he did not indulge for a little while in his favourite indoor amusement, dancing. The car accordingly glides up to the entrance of a fashionable night club. Not one of those that appear in the police-court news in the papers, but an eminently respectable, though none the less amusing night club. The only pleasure it does not offer that its shabbier sisters do,

is the possibility of a raid by the police. There is not a policeman in London who would raid this club. He would as soon think of raiding the Athenæum.

There is a great deal of misapprehension among the uninitiated as to the kind of place a night club is, and it is owing to this misapprehension that many people are a little shocked at the heir to the throne's visits to these places. If they had seen some of these clubs as I have on a night when the Prince of Wales was present they would soon lose their uneasiness. Far from being haunts of illicit drinking, drug-taking, and other vices, they exhibit considerably more decorum than a hunt-ball. There are of course others, but that, as Mr. Kipling would say, is another story.

When H.R.H. goes to these places he is of course attached to some party, either as guest or occasionally as host, and he normally restricts his dancing activities to members of his party, though there have been plenty of times when he has danced with professional instructresses. Though he is much better at the game than the average dancer, he is always willing to learn, and it is in this way that he has kept himself au fait with the latest develop-"He is extraordinarily easy to teach," said one of his instructresses to me. "because he is so modest and so willing to Not like some of these fat City men whom we have here who tread on my feet and then seem surprised because I cannot keep them out of the way. it's really a pleasure to give the Prince of Wales a lesson," she added proudly.

If you are a member of the Prince's party and are of the fair sex, you will almost certainly have the pleasure of dancing with him yourself, and it will be for you an eventful evening. If you are a man, however, you do not have quite such a good time—not through any fault of the Prince, of course, but because your partners always contrast you with him, and so often do not hesitate to mention it. To begin with, you are not nearly so thrilling to dance with, and to go on with, you are not such a good dancer, and by the end of the evening, if you are at all sensitive, you are feeling like one of the world's greatest ne'er-do-wells with two left feet.

I have myself, however, found a particular source of amusement on these occasions which has enlivened many an evening. This game consists in watching the other people there and seeing how they react to

the Prince's presence. There are, of course. the more hardened and highly trained, who, if we are not of the party, take no more notice of him beyond a momentary stir of interest on his arrival. But there are others present who are not accustomed to finding themselves unawares in such exalted company, and it is very amusing to watch these when curiosity is struggling with their good manners, and to see them casting surreptitious glances in the Prince's direction when they think no one is look-There are, however, generally three or four of the season's debutantes who have not yet learnt such craft, and in spite of watchful protests from their mothers, and entreaties not to stare so much because it is rude, just gaze at the Prince and his partner with frankly envious eyes, wondering if they themselves will ever achieve the distinction of dancing with him.

As a matter of fact, to accompany H.R.H. on one of these night-club visits is no task for a tired man. He is one of the most indefatigable dancers I have ever met, insisting on dancing every dance as it comes, one of the first on the floor and one of the last off. I can assure you that by the time two o'clock arrives most of the party are much more ready for bed than he is. But he has a heavy day's work on the next day and must endeavour to get a good night's sleep before it starts, so again the car comes round, collects the Prince and takes him off, this time to bed at last.

And with his departure half the gaiety of the evening is gone. His partners, too, pack up and go, tired but happy, and the band relaxes some of the abandon with which it had been playing. Another evening's amusement for the Prince is over.

I have often been asked why the Prince of Wales has never married, and it is after just such an evening as I have described that the question comes with greatest After one has seen him dancing and talking with his partners, it is quite clear that the explanation cannot be that he is shy with women, for he has clearly the greatest personal charm with them, and is always completely at his ease. I must confess that the question baffles me; but this much I know: the Prince realises and insists that, though his time is his people's, his life is his own, and that the era when it was necessary for princes of royal blood to make diplomatic alliances with foreign princesses is dead and gone. Marriage is a matter upon which he intends to follow the dictates of his own feelings.

In that, everyone can respect him and sympathise with him, and can realise that the answer to the question why he has not married is because he has not yet fallen in love. This, however, has not kept the breath of rumour from connecting his name with plenty of other names, commoners, and foreign royalties,

In fact, scarcely a year passes without a sudden rumour arising, no one knows from what source, that the Prince of Wales is about to become engaged to someone other. Indeed, on his first trip to America, it was widely bruited in the American press that, whatother ostensible reasons had been given, his main object in coming over to the States was seek a wife. and great was the speculation as to which wealthy and exclusive debutante he would choose.

Such rumours seem laughable to us in England, but there was no less truth in them than in many other rumours which we over here are prone to believe.

The Prince of Wales has not yet married because he has not yet met his choice, and I for one am content to wait un-

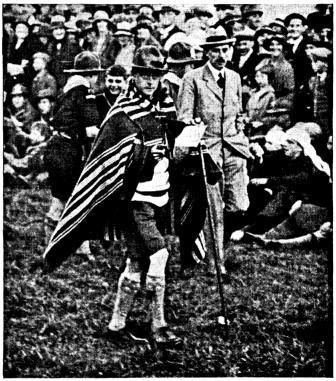
speculating until he does, in the assurance that his choice will meet in this, as in other matters, with the loyal approval of his people.

It is only natural that his parents, the King and Queen, are sometimes a little concerned at his lack of interest in matrimony, but they, like the British Empire, are much too fond of the Prince to attempt to persuade him into a marriage not of his own choosing, and therefore we must leave His Royal Highness and his future bride to await their destiny.

XIV.

HEIR TO THE THRONE.

HERE is one great difficulty about writing the biography of a young man in the prime of life. He will persist in doing things even while his biography is in the press, so that any record tends to be out of date before it is published. With the Prince recently this has been more true than ever. When the idea of writing this book was conceived, several



[Central Press.

H.R.H. IN CAMP WITH WELSH BOY SCOUTS.

years ago, the Prince had just finished his South African tour, and the conception of him most to the fore was as an Empire builder and as an ambassador of the English-speaking peoples. A spiritual descendant, as the more imaginative and historically minded of journalists used to put it, of Drake and Frobisher and Raleigh, of Captain Cook and Clive, of Cecil Rhodes and Captain Scott.

Now when at last my idea has been realised it is a very different vision that the nation has of the Prince of Wales. It sees him now as heir to the throne, the

deputy of his father during his long and dangerous illness, and successor to his father in years that we hope are still far off.

It is of interest to cast our minds back across the pageant of English royalty of the last three generations. The Prince himself was born in the reign of Queen Victoria. His childhood was spent in the reign of his grandfather, Edward VII, and his manhood in that of his father. George V. Even in his own comparatively short lifetime he has known three very different sovereigns on the throne of England, and has seen the attitude of the nation as a

than any other, and must be judged solely on its results. There is, it is true, a certain sentimental attraction among a large number of the British people for monarchy as a system of government, due to the centuries of ripe tradition behind it. But that sentimental attraction is not strong enough to stand any great strain. It depends upon the reigning representative of the Royal Family to retain and strengthen the tradition.

It has frequently been said—almost too frequently, I am inclined to think-that the House of Windsor was the only Royal House in Europe that weathered the War

successfully, and that came out of it in a stronger position than it went in. That indeed is true, and for the strengthening of the Crown in Great Britain we have to thank not only the King himself, but every member of the Royal Family. But although the strength of its position has actually been increased by the War, 'adherents of monarchy cannot lean back in their chairs and think that the danger is past. The unrest caused by the War has by no means ceased with hostilities. It if anything been augmented since the coming of peace. During the War there was a spirit of corporate endeavour that made people forget their small personal grievances in the great common pur-

pose for which the country was striving. But after the War, when all that we had been fighting for seemed to be farther away than before it, the people had the leisure and the inclination to look at the situation from their own personal standpoints, and to criticise the system under which they found their wants unsatisfied. This time the monarchical system is still going through, and it is therefore imperatively a time during which it is most important that there should be a worthy representative of that system on the throne.

His Majesty King George V, who so recently passed through a wearying period of illness, has consolidated the throne as



[Central News.

FEEDING THE DEER. An incident of the Prince's visit to Japan.

whole towards monarchy undergo a very great change. It is not that the throne was unpopular in the days of Queen Victoria. It is very far from being the case that it is unpopular now. But there is a great difference between the type of popularity it enjoys now and that it enjoyed under Queen Victoria. Between the two lies all the vast social and socialistic change that has taken place in this country during the last three decades. Thirty years ago monarchy was in England, either consciously or subconsciously, a system of government that had the direct and specific support of the Almighty. To-day it is merely a form of constitution that is in itself no better

a democratic institution; he will leave behind him a heritage of respect, and of that affection which is so much more than respect. It is our duty in this last part of the life of his heir to see if we can judge to what extent he will be worthy of his heritage, and whether he, in his turn, will leave the throne the stronger for his tenancy.

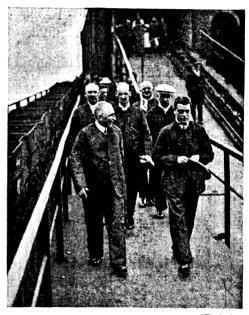
We have seen that from his earliest childhood the Prince of Wales has been brought up with the steadfast view of his being made fit for his highly specialised career of Prince and future King. Though so much of his youthful training was devoted to giving him an insight into the common life of his future people, at no time has he been allowed to forget that his real duty in life is to be the ruler of the Empire.

There is a story told of him at the age of three that shows how early the impression of his destiny was made clear to him. At the time when there was a great deal of distress among the working classes, and the facts had considerable publicity in the press, little David was having one of those much appreciated talks with his grandfather, then the Prince of Wales. His grandfather had been telling him about the poor children who had not enough to eat. and had wound up his story by asking David what he would do about it. "When I am King," said David, "I shall not let any children go without food. I shall make it a law that they shall have as much bread and butter as they want-yes, and buns too!"

I wonder if the Prince during his recent tour of the coalfields remembered his child-hood's promise to his grandfather. The scenes he saw on that tour were more harrowing than any thirty years ago, and the infant dream that he as King or as Prince could do much to cure them had long faded. But the overpowering pity was still there, and the determination to do what he could.

From his boyhood up one of the most salient features of his character has been his sympathy with those in distress. An incident still very vivid in the minds of some who were at Dartmouth with him is of a time when he found some cadets playing with a rabbit that had been caught by a dog. The boys had placed the timid creature in a small enclosure, and were having a competition as to which of them could catch it in the shortest time. The little animal was cowering terrified in a

corner when the Prince arrived. He strode up to the biggest boy there. "What are you doing to that rabbit?" he asked. "Look here," said the boy, who had always disliked the Prince because of his popularity, "you may be Prince of Wales, but you are not running this show. You can jolly well mind your own business." The Prince stepped up to him. "Whether I am Prince of Wales has nothing to do with this. Unless you let the poor little creature go at once, I shall do my level best to thrash you."... The little rabbit was set free, and scurried back thankfully to its home.



[Topical.

H.R.H. AFTER DESCENDING A COAL-PIT IN THE NORTH.

I have recalled these two stories of the Prince's childhood because I wished to show that it has always been a characteristic of his to have his pity readily aroused. This I regard as a good omen for his future success. The cause of the fall of every monarchy in Europe has been that the King and the people were out of sympathy. "Let them eat cake," said Marie Antoinette when told that the people of Paris had no bread; and the House of Bourbon fell. When in February, 1929, H.R.H. learnt that the mining villages of England were in a tragic plight through want, he immediately associated himself with the appeal

that was being launched to assist them, and shortly afterwards went himself in person not only to see their condition but to assure them and the whole country how close was their cause to his heart and to that of the King, his father.

It is to a large degree this sympathy for distress that fits him for the office he will hold. His gift of personifying the heart and sympathy of the nation at large wins the affection of the people, and makes the status of the Royal Family more secure than any military or economic force could do, for moral strength is infinitely more potent than any physical support.

There is another duty of kingship in this country that plays a far greater part than

it is generally given credit for. A little splash of colour, a dash of pageantry and pomp and circumstance undoubtedly gladdens the heart of the great British public. The King has not only to be the interpreter of the national sympathies, but he must also be prepared on occasions to be the central figure in ceremonies that will gratify our national love of showmanship. It may not seem at first sight a very important duty for a King, but it is one that is very close to the English heart, and that any King of England must carry out with dignity. It would be so easy to imagine an impressive

ceremony, such as the Opening of Parliament, being ruined by the presence of a King who had not the dignity needed for such a task. Farmer George a hundred and fifty years ago made himself the laughing-stock of the country, because, although he possessed many of the qualifications of kingship, he cut a ridiculous figure ceremonially. Fortunately the training of the Prince of Wales has been so thorough as to insure that he will suffer from no disability of that kind. He has from his earliest youth been accustomed to being a central figure in State pageants. When he was a very small child he was naturally not quite so impressed with the need for dignity. On one occasion he complained bitterly at being obliged to be present at a certain ceremony. "I don't want to go out there and be looked at by all the people," he said. "I want to stay at home and play with Mary." It was the natural cry of a child enthralled in his private games, but it was his duty as Prince of Wales to go, and go he did.

Since those days the Prince has many times worn the Royal Purple, and familiarity with ceremonies has not bred contempt. On every occasion where dignity has been needed he has risen to the opportunity and has proved himself possessed of the ability his grandfather had, of looking every inch a prince. It may be but a small part of the duties of a



[Quick Pictures, Ltd.

PRESENTATION OF MEDALS TO SPECIAL CONSTABLES IN HYDE PARK.

King but it is in many ways a vital part.

Yet another qualification for an ideal heir to the throne is one of omission rather than of commission. It is the old, old case of Cæsar's wife. It is of the utmost importance that there should be no breath of scandal about the Prince. It is of course impossible entirely to prevent tongues wagging. "Be thou as pure as ice, as chaste as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." King Edward throughout his reign suffered from uncharitable recollections of some of the wild oats he was said to have sown in his youth, and perhaps many of us are rather pleased than otherwise at those human touches which seem to indicate that purple

blood is not entirely different from ordinary blood in its manifestations.

The Prince of Wales has been the unwilling victim of as large a number of rumours as anyone in the country, except perhaps some actress with a good publicity agent. view of his unmarried state, it is natural that most of these rumours have been with regard to a purely mythical wife. The number of people it has been suggested at various times he is going to marry is catholic in its scope, varying from foreign princesses to daughters of English peers and even actresses. It is seldom that more than a month goes by without someone asking me whether it is really true that the Prince is going to marry So-and-so. And in nearly every case an entirely different name is mentioned, a sure indication of the lack of foundation for the rumour. If it happened that some one name were persistently coupled with that of the Prince it might well be felt that he had fallen from the ideal we have of princeship, that the breath of scandal should not touch his As it is, when nearly every gossip selects a different person as his future mate, and the same gossip names a different person every few months, we may rest content in the knowledge that such rumours are only one of the many penalties the Prince has to pay for the absorbing interest taken by the public in his life and movements.

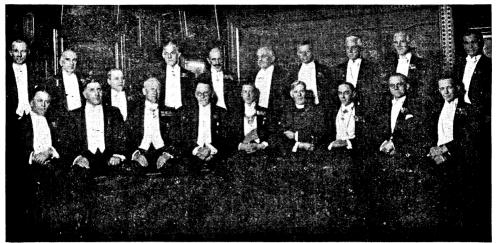
In matters other than marriage it is seldom that one ever hears the slightest rumour about the Prince. Of course there are certain folk who object to him occasionally attending night clubs, and now and again one hears from some knowing would-be young man-about-town that the reason the "What-you-may-call-it" was not raided last night was because the Prince of Wales was present. But if you inquire more closely into the credentials of the gossip you will in all probability find that he has never been near the "What-you-may-call-it" in his life, and that as a matter of fact the Prince of Wales has not either.

I do not mean to suggest for a moment that H.R.H. has not at any time, especially when he was younger, engaged in some perfectly natural pranks not perhaps entirely consistent with his dignity as a Prince. But in every case these pranks were harmless and the natural ebullition of high spirits. When one considers the ease with which rumours about members of the Royal Family get about, it is greatly to the credit of the Prince's tact that, except

for the unavoidable and entirely false rumours about his future wife, he has to a quite extraordinary extent escaped calumny.

WE are left then from what we know of H.R.H.'s character and training to see if we can prophesy the sort of ruler he will make. It is a task that may seem easier than it is. Thinking of his vast personal popularity, one would say immediately that he will clearly be an ideal ruler for the British Empire. But there is also a view that has sometimes been expressed to me, that while His Royal Highness has been an ideal Prince of Wales, he lacks a certain something which he would need as a King. That view is, I think, largely due to the persistent newspaper fiction that he is a young man. The Prince of Wales is no longer a young man: he is midway between thirty and forty years of Yet there is scarcely a newspaper that will recognise this chronological fact. Fifteen years ago they started to write of him as a young man, and they have never bothered to change their type. The natural result of anyone for fifteen years reading about the Prince as a young man is to ascribe to him still the irresponsibility of youth. That this is by no means the case it is in part the object of this memoir to show. The Prince has played many parts in his lifetime and every one of them has been a man's part. He was a sailor before the War. During the War he was a soldier, a charity collector, an unofficial ambassador to Italy. Since the War he has been thrice ambassador of Empire, several times commercial ambassador to the States, to South America, and to various parts of Europe. At home he has constantly been the mouthpiece of the King and of the people. Every one of these was a man's job, and in none has he been found wanting. Only a short time ago he was called upon in the illness of his father to take the place and to carry out the duties of King. The way he stepped into the breach proved that he lacks nothing of the dignity that is required for the kingly office. The only criticism heard against him is the old journalistic myth that he is still a young man and therefore has the irresponsibility of youth. That myth, as we have seen, has no foundation and should be at once destroyed.

There is one last word to be said upon the subject. We live, as superficial writers are so fond of telling us, in a democratic age; any institution that can hope to survive



F. A. Swaine.

H.R.H. WITH THE COURT OF THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF MASTER MARINERS AT THE GUILDHALL.

must be democratic and one that has the heartfelt support of the great majority of the people. There is no longer room for an aristocratic tradition. What survives must do so because of the support of the people. For this reason it is significant that there is no one in this Empire who has met so many different classes of people as has the Prince of Wales, and there is no one who has managed to get and remain

on such good terms with every one of them. His training has done much to fit him for his end, and his staff has done far more than most people realise. But the material on which they worked was the right stuff, and when all is said and done it is that nebulous quality that we call his Royal charm that gives us assurance that he will prove worthy of his trust. A great King of a great Empire.

EDWARD P.

A New and Intimate Life Story of H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, By EVELYN GRAHAM.

The Publishers have pleasure in announcing that this important and eagerly awaited biography, extracts from which have appeared in this and the three preceding issues of THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE (back numbers still available), will shortly be published in volume form.

THE FOOTBALL PHOTOGRAPH

By H. C. BAILEY

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ILLUSTRATED BY IOHN CAMPBELL

THE shop of Durfey and Killigrew sold jewellery to Queen Anne. Perhaps it was a little dowdy even then. Its low-browed windows are not for the smart or the millionaire, but for people who want value for money. Yet Durfey and Killigrew show some perception of the progress of mankind since Queen Anne's death. The doors and windows of their shop are closed with rolling steel shutters.

It was a Monday morning in August. Mr. Fortune was explaining to Mrs. Fortune without hope that duty would prevent his going to the house in Scotland to which she had promised to take him. In grouse he has no interest till they are dead; in venison, none, dead or alive. He does not care to kill anything or to see it killed except in the way of his profession. A place in which there is nothing to do but take exercise he considers bad for his constitution, and the conversation of country houses weakens his intellect. All this he set forth plaintively to Mrs. Fortune, and she said, "Don't blether, child," and the telephone rang.

Reggie contemplated that instrument with a loving smile. "How wonderful are the works of science, Joan. What a beneficent invention." He jumped at it. "Yes, Fortune speaking. What? Durfey and Killigrew? Of course I know 'em. My grandmother bought me studs there. Like warming-pans. Burglary? Yes, I'll come if you want me. Not much in my way, is it? Oh, all right." He turned to Mrs. Fortune. "Well, well. Duty, Joan, 'Duty, stern daughter of the voice of God'; thou too, darling."
"Pig," said she. "You are a fraud,
Reggie."

"Oh, no. No deception. Some poor

beggar's been killed." He kissed her hair He departed.

The roll shutters of Durfey and Killigrew were still down when his taxi came to the shop. A large man met him and took him round the corner. In a narrow side street the shop has another window and an entrance, and over these also the shutters were drawn. But in the shutter at the entrance was a small steel door, and that stood aiar.

The lights were on inside. Some men were crowded into a corner, talking softly, watching others who moved about the shop. From behind the counter rose the square form of Superintendent Bell. Reggie came to his beckoning finger. It pointed down to the space between the counter and the unrobbed showcase of silver on the wall. A man lay there in what had been a pool of blood. He wore a long coat of olive green with purple cuffs and collar. "It's the porter, sir," said Bell.

Reggie crouched over the body. Its brow was torn and bruised, but the blood came from a wound in the throat. He worked upon both . . . The clenched hands and the blood on their knuckles interested him. ... From the man's coat he scraped something sticky and shapeless and put it in a specimen box. He opened the dead mouth.

Then he stood up and gazed round the shop. "Well, well," he murmured. "Too many people."

"That's the manager and the assistants, sir." Bell nodded at the group in the corner. "Waiting to check what's been And we'll have to check them off taken. too."

"Oh, yes. Yes. But there must be an office or something. Shut 'em up there." So the staff of Durfey and Killigrew's was removed while Reggie contemplated the dead man with large and dreamy eyes.

Bell came back briskly. "Well, sir, what about it?"

"Has he been moved?" said Reggie.

"They say this is where they found him."
"Yes. It could be," Reggie murmured. He wandered away, bent and poring over the floor. He dropped on hands and knees. His finger-tips moved upon the linoleum. He stooped close, he cut some small pieces out of it. "Yes, blood, I think. I'll verify it. But I should say this is where he was knocked on the head." Reggie sat on his heels and looked up at Superintendent Bell with plaintive wonder. "What was he

doing here at all?" "Ah. If we knew that we'd know something. He didn't live here. Nobody lives here. He wasn't the watchman. They don't have one. He doesn't lock up. There's always two of 'em do that together, manager and one of the assistants. He was just the porter. He pulled down the shutters and made 'em fast one o'clock Saturday and went off home. That's the routine. Then the other chaps went out through the side door there. Come and have a look, sir. See? The shutter comes down over the entrance and is fastened to the floor with those bolts inside. little door in it lets 'em out and when they're outside they lock that up. Well, they went off like that on Saturday and the manager swears there was nobody left in the shop. When he came this morning, the door was still locked all right, but as soon as he got inside he saw the place had been robbed. Then he found the porter lying dead behind the counter." Bell put his head on one side and looked at his Mr. Fortune with a paternal smile. "Now, sir, the place was still locked up safe, but the porter had got inside and been killed and somebody had gone off with a bag full of jewellery. Do you

see how it was done?"
"Not wholly. No."

Bell chuckled. "Ah. It beats Mr. Fortune! Then I'm going to get some of my own back for once. Look here, sir." He bent to the bolts which should have held the shutter to the floor.

"Oh, that," Reggie murmured. "I saw that when I came in. Some fellow's cut through the bolts. From outside. There's a mark or two on the base of the shutter. What was the tool? I don't do much burglary myself."

"Thank Heaven there's something you

don't know," Bell growled. "Yes, it was a queer tool. A cold chisel uncommon long and thin—they slid it under the shutter and hammered it through the bolts. And that's pretty queer too. These fellows knew just what they needed to make a short cut into this funny old shop; they got their tool made and they had the almighty cheek to stand in the street and hammer at the door."

"Yes, quite bold. But I suppose it

wouldn't take long."

"Matter of minutes, sir. Still, hammering at a jeweller's door in the open street! It is so blooming impudent. Once they cut the bolts, of course they had a soft job. Ran the shutter up a little, came underneath and——"

"And brought the porter in to kill him.

Yes. All very clear, Bell."

"I don't know what the porter was doing, sir. That beats me."

"I wouldn't say that," Reggie murmured.
"I think I know what he was doing, Bell.
But why did he come inside? And why
did they kill him? Not according to plan.
Some error. I should look into the porter."
He gazed at Bell dreamily. "By the way,
what are you looking into?"

"Everything, as you might say. We haven't got a line yet. No finger-prints. Glove job. Professionals, of course. We'll have to put some work in. It's a kind of insult to the police, breaking in in this barefaced way. When I told Mr. Lomas he said it was the most infernal impudence of his wretched career."

"Yes. Yes. It is cheek," Reggie nodded. "I feel that. I don't like being ignored myself. I'll go and sympathise. When you've looked up the porter's record you might come along."

The Hon. Sidney Lomas at his desk was surprised by the touch of a gentle hand.

"Alas, my poor brother!" Reggie sighed.
"Ha, Reginald! Bell said he would get
you on to it. Good man!"

"I am. But unrecognised. Treated as negligible. Same like you, Lomas. I resent this."

"Deuced impudent, isn't it? Burgle a West End jeweller's from the street with a hammer. Damme, it's defying the whole police force."

"Yes. Not respectful. I think there were precautions, you know. Still, not nice of 'em. But they've behaved shocking to me. Killing a poor wretch crude and casual in the course of the job as if they could get away with a murder as easy as

nothing. My only aunt! I exist, I suppose; I am still extant."

"My dear fellow," Lomas chuckled,

"highly extant."

"Yes. Yes, I think so. I resent being ignored by an elementary person with a cold chisel."

"By all means. And what are you going

to do about it, Reginald?"

"Well, I was going to provide some work for our active intelligent police force. There are one or two little points left lying about by our nasty friend with the cold chisel. Hallo, here's Bell, nice and quick."

"Got the outlines, sir. Pretty well all the jewellery in the place is gone, except some things in the safe. That's not been touched. The silver and gold plate seems all there. You might say they cleared out the light stuff. The manager puts it at ten thousand pounds provisional."

"And very nice too," Lomas smiled. "All anywhere by now. Looks easy, doesn't it, Bell? Mr. Fortune says he has

some work for you."

"I thought he had," Bell said gloomily. "I can see plenty of work myself. But nothing that leads anywhere. What's your line, sir?"

"It's the porter, you know," Reggie

murmured.

"The manager says he'd answer for him absolutely. Been employed a dozen years. Always straight."

"Poor beggar," Reggie sighed. "And how does the manager think he came to be

inside, Bell?"

"The idea is, he saw something wrong at the side door and came inside to see what was up and the burglars killed him."

Lomas nodded. "Reasonable enough. We've had cases like it before. What's the

matter, Reginald?"

"Well, you haven't, you know. Not cases like this. Think again, Lomas. At one o'clock Saturday the porter went off duty. The first thing he ought to do is to get out of his highly coloured livery. By the way, where is his home? What about his people? Nobody's reported him missing and he's been dead since Saturday."

"Has he, though?" said Lomas quickly. "Oh, yes. Yes. Forty hours or more.

His blood's been drying quite a long time." "Nobody reported him missing because he lived alone," said Bell. "Rooms in workmen's dwellings, Clerkenwell. No family."

Reggie sighed. "We don't have much

luck. Well, well. He didn't go home and change on Saturday. He hung about. burglars couldn't begin to work till everybody was well away from the shop. Nevertheless, when they did begin the porter was handy in his livery all complete. What about it, Lomas?"

"You mean he was an accomplice."

"Yes. That is indicated. If he wasn't -why did he go in? Suppose he saw the fellows at work—the natural thing is to challenge 'em and make a row. Suppose he came along when they'd gone inside—they wouldn't have left the shutter up, and while it's down nothing shows. He must have been an accomplice or he wouldn't have gone in. And that explains the remarkable cheek of hammering at the door in the street. Nobody would interfere with them while Durfey and Killigrew's own porter stood by. They'd pass for lawful workmen mending the shutters."

"You've got it, sir," Bell cried. "That's

neat."

"Yes. I am neat," Reggie sighed. "So were they. Up to a point. Then the thing got away with 'em.'

"Yes, sir. That often happens in crime,"

Bell said solemnly.

"Or where would we be?" Reggie smiled. "When you two have finished chirping at each other!" Lomas cut in. "It isn't so dam' clear, Reginald. Take it your way. The porter was an accomplice. He stood by to guarantee them while they forced the shutter. Good. That explains their confounded cheek very nicely. But it don't explain in the least why he went in after 'em. Or why they killed him."

"No. I noticed that," Reggie murmured. "I don't know everything, Lomas; I don't know why he went in. Not according to plan, I think. Some error. And the thing

got away with 'em."

"You might take it he went in to see how much they got," Bell suggested. "So he shouldn't be done out of his fair share of the swag. And there was a row about it and they did him in. We've had cases like that, sir."
"Yes, it could be," Reggie murmured.

"Yes, I dare say you're right, Bell." Lomas settled deeper in his chair. "That'll do for a theory. Quite nice. But it's only a theory. It doesn't give you anything to work on."

"I never thought it did," Bell said gloomily. "One of those cases where you've got a lot of donkey work. It was

a professional job and well planned out beforehand. We'll have to go through all the burglars on the list. I don't mind owning, there's nothing in it that's any fellow's particular style. It's too simple."

"Simplicity is the mark of ability,"

Reggie mumbled.

I dare say. You are often obscure, Reginald." Lomas yawned and lit a cigarette. "Same old game, what? Same dull it."

murmured. "The nearest, Lomas old thing. I don't like burglars. I want a murderer."

"Quite. Very proper taste. Happy to oblige. Name and address, please?

"I don't know his name. Or his address. He's a shortish man, agile, of considerable strength; he has dark red hair which is



so much. Yes," He lay back and blew smoke rings. "'Do the work that's nearest. Though it's dull at whiles,'" he

rather long and oiled, and he has lost a triangular piece from one of the two middle teeth in his upper jaw. At this moment



"Nobody would interfere with them while Durfey and Killigrew's own porter stood by."

he has a bruised cut on his face. And he uses chewing-gum."

"Good Gad," said Lomas. "Were you

there?"

"Do you mean there was only one man in it, sir?" Bell cried.

"Oh, no. No. He had a companion. I don't know much about him. He was heavier and I should think older. But the little man did the killing. The porter came in, and they were all three together in the middle of the shop, and there was a quarrel. The small man got his face punched—the porter's knuckles are broken and there was some red hair in the blood. The porter also hit the little man in the mouth and broke his tooth, and the beggar spat out blood and chewing-gum and the bit of tooth, and it all stuck on the porter. Then the little man got some long weapon and hit him on the head. He fell stunned. They hid him behind the counter, and to make sure jabbed him in the throat with a sharp long tool. No doubt it was that long chisel they had made for the job."

"Thank you. Very brilliant, Reginald. And now all we have to do is to find a little man with red hair and a broken tooth.

That's going to be quite easy."

"It is wonderful what you get, sir," Bell

said reverently.

"Quite," Lomas chuckled. "Makes me feel like the man in the play when they show him Peter Pan's shadow. 'It's nobody I know."

"No. You're not suspected at present," Reggie murmured. "Any other helpful suggestions? I want to get on."

"Quite. Very right and proper. \mathbf{W} here

"I was thinking of the porter's humble home.'

"Man there, sir," said Bell.

"Good. May I go and help him?"

Lomas chuckled. "By all means. If there's anything else you want to do, don't mind us. We like it. Forgive our existence, Reginald."

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!" Reggie stood up and contemplated him

benignly. "It's beautiful."

"Thanks so much. Sometimes something seems to say that you feel the depart-

ment superfluous.'

"Oh, no. No. Who ran to lift me when I fell and kissed the place to make it well? My Lomas! I like to feel something safe and solid in the background. Come on, Bell."

The workmen's dwelling in Clerkenwell where the porter lived stood in a by-way, a drab, respectable mass. Children swarmed in the courtyard. The clean staircase was full of the steam of washing-day. "Not the sort of place for a crook, sir," Bell muttered.

"He wasn't," said Reggie.

The porter's rooms were at the top. A detective opened the door to them. fresh news of him, sir. The woman below comes in and cleans up for him twice a week. She was here Saturday morning and saw him go off, and the bed's not been slept in since. Down at the office they say he's lived here a matter of ten years. Reckoned a very steady man. He was well liked in the dwellings." He looked round the room. "Decent place in a plain way."

The porter had taken some pride in it. The room smelt fresh and clean, its scanty furniture was in good order—he had curtains up, and a picture or two; a fair show of china and pots and pans; a home-made shelf bore a collection of objects of art.

Reggie looked at them with some care. Reggie stared at the wall. "Well, well," he murmured, and went into the bedroom. That had no decorations but a coloured print of the King. Its furniture was a bed and a chest of drawers. Reggie opened one after the other. The first was empty. The others contained a few clothes. He came back to the other room where the detective was conferring with Bell. "Have you found anything?"

"No, sir, nothing. He doesn't seem to have had any papers at all. There's no-where for 'em to be."

"Somebody's been Bell shook his head. here before us, Mr. Fortune."

"Yes. That is indicated. I was wondering what they came for. Ask the woman who did the rooms to come up."

She came, a large woman wiping red arms on her apron, breathing hard. "There's something you can tell us, I think," said Reggie amiably. "Has anything gone from this poor chap's rooms?"

She snorted. "Wodsher mean gawn? I ain't took nuffink. Ain't never been in the place since Sat'dy. Tike my dyin' 'oaf I ain't."

"Of course you haven't. We want to know if anybody else has. And there's only you who can tell us what was in his rooms before he was killed."

"Can I? Dunno so much. I ain't no Nosey Parker. I never poked into 'is fings."

She fixed Reggie with a choleric eve. didn't 'ave no golden jools lyin' abaht. 'E kep' 'is bit o' money in the top drawer."

Just show us, will you?" Reggie

murmured.

She waddled into the bedroom. She opened the drawer. "Lummy, it's gawn," she wheezed. "Bit of a tin box it was. guv'nor, so big. I swear it was vere last week."

"Did you ever see it open, mother?"

said Bell.

"Yus, I seen it. 'E 'ad 'is money in it

and some bits o' pipers."

"They got away with his papers, then. Thank you, mother, that's all." He led the way back to the sitting-room.

"One moment," Reggie murmured. "One moment. Has anything else been

taken?"

- "Ardsher mean?" she wheezed. "Ain't nuffink else to tike only 'is bits o' sticks." But Reggie was looking round the room, and she stared about her with puzzled eyes. She moved to the shelf of odds and ends and moved one or two. "Yus, 'is pretties are all 'ere."
 - "What about the pictures?" said Reggie.

"Gorblime!" she gasped. "One of 'is picshers is gone. 'Ere. 'E 'ad one 'angin' up 'ere. Yer can see w'ere ve nile wos, guv'nor."

"Yes, I did see," Reggie smiled.

"Nah, w'at'd anyone want to tike that for ? "

"I wonder. What was it?"

"Jest a blinkin' set o' footballers." "A football team. Was he in it?"

"Not 'im, no. Don't know none of 'em. Don't know w'at 'e 'ad it for."

"Any name to it?"

don't know. Yus. Some nime. Couldn't tell yer. But w'at the 'ell does anyone want to pinch a blinkin' photo of footballers for?"

"Quite so. Yes," Reggie murmured. "Don't you worry. Thanks very much." And with professional exhortations not to

talk about it Bell got rid of her.

Then he stared heavily at Reggie. "And what's going to happen next, if you please? I begin the day with a murder and a tenthousand-pound burglary and come on to a stolen football photo.'

"Yes. Yes. Very careful mind at work," Reggie smiled. "Quite a pleasure

to deal with him."

"Deal with him! He's dealing with us all right. But we don't get near him. He breaks up every clue before we find

"I wouldn't say that. No. I wouldn't say that. Dangerous move destroying clues, Bell. He had to, of course. He couldn't let us see that photo. But he's told us he was in it."

"What, you mean the chap that did the murder was one of this football team?

That's only a guess, sir."

"Quite. Others possible. But the best guess is that my little red-haired friend was

in the photograph."

"Well, suppose he was. That don't help me, sir. How many football teams get photographed every year? You set me to look for a red-haired man with a broken tooth; now you've got it he plays football. I dare say. But it leaves me a nice long job."

"Yes. Yes," Reggie agreed cheerfully. "Better look for a short cut. Somebody at the shop ought to know where the porter had his drop of beer. You might find out what football team was his fancy. Good-

The interesting thing about this case, he has been heard to say, is that it provides some justification for the existence of an expensive police force. He will explain that he always thought he would want to have the department in his theory up to the neck or they would not have gone through with it. In fact, he took the case as a game of chess (Lomas says a game of poker), which is not his habit. He was for once without emotions. And Bell and his men worked like beavers, and Reggie saw his wife off to Scotland and played with bio-chemistry and his marionette theatre.

After some days Lomas rang him up. "Is that you, Reginald? Good. Come round, will you. Bell thinks he's on to something."

Reggie went round. Bell was conferring with Lomas more solemnly than ever. "Well, well. And are we yet alive and see each other's face? How do you do,

"I've had a heavy week, sir. Now, take it from the beginning. We've found a clerk who was working after hours in an office by Durfey and Killigrew's that Saturday afternoon. When he went home he noticed some men hammering at the shop door. Thought it was a bit queer, so he had a look at 'em. Didn't look much because he saw Durfey's porter standing by and sup-

posed it must be all right. But he noticed there were two of 'em, and one was a little chap with red hair. Well, then, we've got on to a chap who's caretaker at a block of offices round the corner. He knew the porter. He came along between three and four o'clock. There was nobody at Durfey's door then, but he saw the porter hanging about in a doorway opposite. Bit surprised to see him in uniform so late on a Saturday. He called out something about it and he thought the porter was a bit short with him.

"Yes. He would be," Reggie murmured. "Poor devil. So that's how he got murdered."

"All fits what you said," Bell nodded. "The porter was there in his uniform so that nobody should meddle with 'em while they were breaking in. If anything was said about it afterwards I suppose he'd have sworn it wasn't him, it was somebody in a sham uniform. That's been done before. But this chap came by who knew him and could swear he was outside while the burglary was being done. He got the wind up and went in to warn his pals. Most likely he wanted 'em to clear off without the swag to save his face. Then there was a row and they did him in. I dare say it all happened like that."

"'Some error and the thing got away with them," Lomas chuckled. game, Reginald. You told us so and you

told us right."

"No butter, thank you," Reggie murmured. "What's the matter with our Superintendent? Your manly brow is depressed, Bell. You make me uncomfortable."

"I'm not easy in my mind about it, Mr. Fortune. I don't like a case to look so neat when I'm only half-way through it. Pretty often I've found, if we've got a theory all fixed up half-way, in the end it turns out we made a big bloomer. You know that too. You're fond of having us on that way."

"Oh, Bell! Oh my, Bell! How can you? I never did. I only look beyond a theory when it don't take in all the evidence."

"You're satisfied, Reginald?" Lomas nodded. "So am I. This is good enough

to go on with, Bell."

"I don't say it isn't, sir," Bell frowned. "But Mr. Fortune talks about taking in all the evidence. That's the trouble. I don't know if we have." He turned to Reggie.

"Mr. Lomas thinks I've got a bee in my

bonnet. But I put it to you, the chances are these two chaps that were seen had someone else in the job with 'em. A big jewel robbery has to be worked out very careful, to study the place and fix up the plans and to get rid of the stuff afterwards."

"Of course there was somebody behind 'em," said Lomas impatiently. "Some fence in a large way of business. There always is. How often do we get these rascals? Once in a score of cases. We'll stick to the red-haired footballer, please."

"Yes, I think so," Reggie murmured.

But Bell was stubborn. "I'm not talking about a fence, sir. What if there was another man actually in the job, Mr. Fortune? It's like this. Yesterday we had notice a man who lived in Barkham Mansions, Marble Arch, was missing."

"Quite a gentlemanly address."

"Yes, sir. He was quite the gentleman, they say. But he was last seen that Saturday afternoon. When our men had a look over his flat they found some queer things. Harvey Stroud was the name he used, and we don't know it, and we can't recognise his description. But he was in touch with a diamond merchant in Amsterdam that does some very shady business, and he kept an outfit that'd come in useful for burglary. He's vanished absolutely. Him and his car. Ever since that Saturday."

"Yes. Very interesting. What was he

like ? "

"Dark chap, going bald. Smiled a lot, showed his teeth. Several gold ones. Tall

and thin. Very spry. Any age."

Reggie shook his head. "I don't think so, Bell. The other man in the shop had large flat feet. And the gentlemanly Mr. Harvey Stroud don't sound like a chap to hammer at a street door. He may have gone off with the swag. I'd like my redhaired little friend first, thank you."

"Quite, just my view." Lomas rubbed his hands. "We'll get on with him, Bell." "Oh. Are you getting warm?" said

Reggie.

"I hope so. Bell's put in very sound work. But he's never happy unless he has a certainty."

"I like to be sure, it's a fact," Bell

grumbled.

Reggie looked at him with half-shut eyes. "Which do you mean? Sure a man ought to be hanged, or sure you can get him hanged? Well, what have you got, Bell?"

"It's going like this, sir. We've got a

man who saw a motor-bike with side-car left in Broadlands Rents that afternoon. You know the place. Light vans and such get parked there ordinary weekdays, nothing much on Saturdays. So he noticed it. And he saw two fellows go off with it. Each of 'em was carrying a workman's tool basket. He thought they looked like

ordinary British workman. Well, any further trace of our red-haired friend?"

"He goes off on the motor-bike and we lose him. But there's the football clue, sir." He stopped. "You know this is all your case really. Everything we've got is what you made for us."

"Oh, no. No. Not my case. Not in



"'Yes, I did see,' Reggie smiled."

builders' men. But the one that rode the bike was a little chap with red hair. Do you notice, Mr. Fortune, these chaps that saw 'em can't tell us anything about the other?''

"Yes. Rather a pity. Yes. But I don't infer that he was the tall and spry and gentlemanly Harvey Stroud. I should say he was somebody who looked the

my way at all," said Reggie quickly. "It's a job for the whole department."

"Quite, quite," Lomas agreed. "Build-

ing things up."

Bell glanced at him. "Yes, sir," he said respectfully. "Well, this is what we've built up, Mr. Fortune. The porter used to have his dinner at a little eating-house round the corner. And they say there he talked

a lot of football, and his pet club was London City. They got into the Final of the Cup last year, you know. Well, their outside left is a little red-haired man, Percy Clark. Been with 'em a long time. popular favourite they tell me."

The football burglar. Quite a new

type," Lomas chuckled.
"And is Mr. Clark known to the police?"

Reggie asked.

Not at all, sir. He's in the regular team, though he isn't a professional. And you can take it First League football players don't do much crime. They train too hard."

"Mr. Clark plays as an amateur. Yes.

And how does he get his living?"

"He's got a business of his own, sir; motor and cycle depot; specialises in motor-bikes."

"Well, well!" Reggie murmured, and Lomas laughed. "It does all fit, doesn't

it, Bell?"

"You mean he could ha' made that queer long chisel they used in his own workshop. Yes, I thought of that. But it is quite a respectable business, old standing; his father had it before him."

Reggie smiled. "What "Yes. Yes."

are his teeth like?"

Bell breathed hard. "Ah. I reckon that's up to you, sir. I've had some fellows look at him, but all they can say is he has a scar on his face, healing. Playing football, he might get that easy."

"Do they play football in August?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Practice games. League season begins before summer's over. What I was thinking—his team has a practice game this evening-if you'd come up and have a look at him."

"If you like. Anything I can do," said Reggie meekly. "What about it, Lomas?"

"Safety first idea, isn't it?" Lomas shrugged. "I should have said we have enough of a case to bring the fellow here and ask him a few questions. But there's no harm in looking him over beforehand. I take it the thing turns on his tooth. he's lost the piece you found, then we've got him cold. If he hasn't, then we shall have to work up something more."

"I don't know about working up," Bell grumbled. "We shall want something more. I thought of taking the chap who saw the burglars at work up to the ground

to see if he could identify Clark."

"Oh, no. No. I wouldn't do that," Reggie said hastily. It's not fair, Bell. The red-haired man he saw was in ordinary clothes. Mr. Clark may look very different stripped for football. Try him in a regular identification parade."

"Very good, sir," Bell frowned. "You don't mind my saying so, but you're uncommon careful to have us do everything

in the regulation routine way for you in this case."

"It's that kind of case, you know."

Reggie was plaintive. "Quite," Lomas approved. "Quite. You're perfectly right, my dear fellow."

The huge amphitheatre of the London City ground was sparsely populated for that practice match. Two men who strolled in just before the kick-off had no difficulty in finding places against the rails. The players ran on to the field and lined up. The red head of Percy Clark glistened in the sun.

"Yes. Quite oily," Reggie murmured. "And the right red, thank you." He smiled. "Cut over the eye nearly gone.

Sturdy little wretch, isn't he?"

"He could have struck that blow?"

Bell said under his breath.

"Oh, Lord, yes. Just the man. Short and powerful. I told you he would be. Quick on his feet, isn't he?" Clark was making rings round the opposing half. "That also. Oh, hang!" Clark had come into contact with the back. They had some badinage.

"I didn't see," Bell muttered.

is it? Tooth there, sir?"

"No, it isn't. The whole tooth's gone. He's had it out, confound him. And that is that." He turned away.

"What do you want to do now, sir?" Bell said when they reached the street.

"Carry on, carry on. You'll have to ask Mr. Clark to come to Scotland Yard, and if he won't come—take him."

"I'll tell Mr. Lomas, sir."

"Oh, yes. Yes. Let's be correct,"

Reggie smiled.

And everything was done in order as he desired. That night two grave men called on Percy Clark in the neat little house beside his garage. They asked him to come and give Superintendent Bell a little information. He laughed. He wanted to know what about. They said the Superintendent would tell him. He replied that he had no time to go running round to police stations. They said he would have to make it. went with them.

"Cut it short, will you, old friend?" He

greeted Bell jauntily. "I'm a busy man."
"All right," said Bell. "You just tell

me what you were doing the afternoon of

Saturday the 20th."
"I don't think!"

"I don't think!" Clark winked. "Want to pinch me for something, do you? Nothing doing, old bean. There's been too much in the papers about what a chap gets by talking to the police."

"You can't account for your time that

afternoon?"

"Not 'arf," said Clark. "I'm saying nothing, mate."

"If you're innocent, you're a fool," Bell

frowned

"You've got nothing against me. I know that. Not being a fool, old friend, I'm not going to help you fake up a charge. Got that? Now, what about it?"

"You'll be detained as a suspected

person," said Bell.

"What of?" said Clark.

"You'll hear when the time comes."

In the morning, Bell put him up for identification by the man who had seen the burglars at work and the man who saw two workmen go off in a side-car. Both of these witnesses picked him out, both declared that they had seen a little man with red hair like his. Neither would say he was the man. His house and his garage were searched and such a tool as the long chisel which had been used in the burglary was found: more than one queer tool of no lawful use.

Then Bell charged him with burglary and murder, and he grinned and asked to see his solicitor.

Reggie was called out of his laboratory to the telephone. "Well, Reginald, Mr. Percy Clark is going to be put through it," said the voice of Lomas. "In the police court to-morrow. Happy now?"

"Not happy, no. Tranquil. I thought

you'd have to."

"Quite. You're satisfied? Good. So am I. Come round, will you? The Public Prosecutor wants to talk."

Reggie came into a room which seemed to be occupied by a large man in front of

the fireplace, who lectured.

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie moaned. "Lomas—oh, you are there. I couldn't see you for the noise. Hallo, Bell! You look disgruntled." He turned at last to Mr. Montagu Finchampstead, the Public Prosecutor. "What's the matter with you, Finch?"

"He's explaining that he doesn't think much of the case," said Lomas.

"Fancy that," Reggie murmured. "Haven't we been correct, Lomas? How would Finch have done it?"

"The question is not how I should have done it, but whether the evidence you have will obtain a conviction. And——"

"Is it?" said Lomas. "I should say if the police have good evidence a man was guilty of murder he ought to go for trial."

"Good evidence, yes," Finchampstead fumed. "There's practically nothing but

Fortune's story."

"My what?" Reggie was hurt. "I

don't tell stories, Finch."

"We have some other striking facts," said Lomas. "A man very like this chap was on the scene of the murder. He has the motor-bike equipment and the burglarious tools which the murderer required. He's a footballer, and a football photo was stolen from the murdered man's room after the crime."

"A lot of detail," Finchampstead snorted.
"Of course it's detail," said Lomas.
"Every case is made up of detail: and when each scrap fits the cumulative force is strong."

"Juries don't bother about cumulative force," Finchampstead announced. "We come down to this. The only clear evidence you've got is Fortune's statement about the hair and the piece of tooth. And in my opinion it's not satisfactory."

"Thank you for all these kind words," Reggie murmured. "Why isn't it satisfactory? The murderer left hair on the dead man's fist which is just the colour of Percy Clark's. He left a bit of a front tooth, and Percy has lost all that tooth."

"Just so. All of it," said Finchampstead. "Which means that the bit you found is not evidence against him at all. A man can't have something broken off a

tooth he hasn't got."

"How true, Finch! How brilliant!" Reggie looked at him reverently. "But don't you see, dear, that raises the little questions, when did he have that tooth taken out, and why did he have that tooth taken out? For he had his front teeth all present and correct quite recently. I've found a smiling photograph."

"That's right, sir," Bell nodded. "In the football papers. And I've found customers of his who want to swear he hasn't

lost a front tooth at all."

"Satisfied now?" Lomas smiled.

Finchampstead scowled at him. "No, I am not satisfied. I am bound to say the

evidence is inadequate."

"Now, what exactly do you mean, Finch?" Reggie murmured. "That you don't think Percy was the murderer or that vou don't think vou can make a jury say he was?"

Finchampstead hesitated. "I don't mind owning it's a queer case," he said reluctantly. "You show a strong probability that he is guilty. But I have to make a proof, Fortune."

Lomas laughed. "Just so. You admit

it's a case for trial."

"I agree we must go through with it." Finchampstead rose. "Don't forget, we have no idea what his defence is going to be."

"No. Not a notion," Reggie murmured.

"That'll make it very interesting."

The conference broke up. But Bell took Reggie aside. "Mr. Fortune, do you believe this man's guilty?" he said.

"Oh, yes. Absolutely. Not a doubt. Why?"

Bell drew a long breath. "Well, I'm glad. I did think you were keeping out of

it: leaving it all to us."

"Yes. That is so." He looked at Bell with half-shut eyes. "You notice things," he murmured. "I wanted you fellows to work up the case yourselves. It makes you all nice and keen. I couldn't force a prosecution. But Lomas can. And he ĥas."

The arrest of a First League player for murder was a fortune to newspapers in the depths of the silly season. The great heart of the people was taught to yearn over Percy Clark. Pages of stories, pages of pictures, set forth his deeds on the football field, his beauty and his charm. He became a popular hero persecuted by the police.

The prosecution went on its slow prosaic way. Before the magistrate an old solicitor of renown in criminal cases appeared for Mr. Clark, played lightly with the evidence against him and announced that he would reserve his defence. Mr. Clark was com-

mitted for trial.

When the case came on, a crowd fought to get into the court, a crowd remained outside. The driest, hardest little judge on the bench took the case. "Looks in form," Lomas smiled. "He'll hang the fellow if

"He will keep the jury to the evidence," said Finchampstead with dignity, glancing at the fleshy advocate who was leading for the defence.

But Mr. Justice Blackshaw had no chance for his noted snubs. Sir Edward Pollexfen did not use the melodramatic style which has made him the idol of the criminal classes. He took the case as quietly as the neat counsel for the prosecution. The dangerous evidence of Reggie did not excite him, his cross-examination treated Mr. Fortune with careless respect. evidence is that the murderer had red hair and lost a portion of a tooth in his struggle with the dead man. Very good. I suggest that many men have red hair, Mr. Fortune."

"Yes. . Not so many this shade of red." "Still, a good many. You produce one hair and a piece of a front tooth. You don't suggest that piece is missing from any of the prisoner's teeth."

"Not from any that he has now. He has had the tooth in the position from which

this piece came removed."

"If he had lost that tooth before the murder, this piece cannot be his?"

"If he had," said Reggie, and was told that was all.

Lomas looked at Finchampstead. "Taking it easy, what?"

"Much too easy," Finchampstead

frowned.

Reggie came from the witness-box to sit beside them. "Well, well. I should say we're going to hear some good hard swearing, Finch."

'I should say they have a good answer.

I was afraid of that, Fortune.

"Yes, yes. I know you were," Reggie murmured.

The defence continued to take it easy. The men who had seen a red-haired little fellow at the time and place of the murder were let go with the admission that they could not swear to Percy Clark. The woman telling of the stolen football photograph was only required to admit she did not know who was in it. The customers of Clark who swore he had had all his teeth till the eve of the murder were contemptuously challenged. Bell's own evidence of strange tools in Clark's workshop was dismissed with a few technical questions to confuse the jury.

Pollexfen arose to open the defence with expansive confidence. The jury must be amazed at the weakness of the case which they had been brought to hear. In all his long experience he had never known a criminal charge supported by such scanty, flimsy evidence. It would be apparent to them that no rational man could find the prisoner guilty. But his client was not content to be acquitted for lack of evidence against him. He claimed the right to prove his innocence. And he would show that he could have had no part in the crime.

"That means we're going to have an

alibi," said Lomas.

But they began with the tooth. Some of the other players in Clark's football team swore that he had an accident in practice the week before the murder and stood out of training.

"Yes, I dare say they're telling the truth," Reggie murmured. "He'd want time off to

make his little arrangements."

They testified that Clark had a kick in the face, complained that it had loosened his teeth, told them the front one had gone so shaky he had to pull it out.

"Thus avoiding any dentist's evidence,"

Reggie murmured.

The prosecuting counsel, going gingerly. brought out that they had no knowledge how the tooth was lost except what Clark had told them.

And then came a man who said he lived at Gilsfield. It is a little place fifty miles out of London, away from main lines and main roads.

Reggie lay back and gazed at him with mild and dreamy eyes.

The man said he was a retired grocer, and he looked it. He had a habit of going out for a stroll and getting a cup of tea at a wayside inn, the "Billhook." He knew Mr. Clark by seeing him there pretty often. He was at the "Billhook" on the Saturday of the murder. He saw Mr. Clark there. Under cross-examination he was sure of the date, but vague about the time. It was tea-time: might have been four or five. "Or six or seven?" counsel sug-But he was sure it was before the gested. bar opened. The Court laughed.

"Pretty vague," said Lomas.

"Yes. Yes. Mr. Clark will want them to do better than that," Reggie murmured, and contemplated the sharp, impudent face in the dock.

The landlord of the "Billhook" came next, an oldish, fattish man, sweating freely. He also knew Mr. Clark. Mr. Clark often came to the "Billhook" when he was out on his motor-bike. He came that Saturday. Came for a bit o' lunch. Stayed on till it was getting dark. Had a bit o' game with the darts in the afternoon. He knew the

date, he'd got it scored up. Mr. Clark lost half a dollar to him and hadn't paid yet. Again the Court laughed. And crossexamination made nothing of the landlord. He was anxious to oblige, in the manner of a publican, he wheezed and he sweated, but he stuck to his story.

"So that's that," Reggie murmured. watching him out of the box. "Now, what's little Blackshaw going to do about

it ? "

Pollexfen's speech for the defence took that for granted. He boomed assurance. The charge had collapsed; it was atoms, dust. The prisoner was proved innocent before God and man.

And for the first time the little Judge had his chance to snap. Some lovers of football were applauding. He scarified

The reply for the prosecution was in a minor key, ironic about alibis, sarcastic upon dentistry by hearsay, bitter in emphasis on the anxiety of someone to destroy the evidence that the murdered man had a

footballing friend.

Mr. Justice Blackshaw took snuff. summing up came in his driest style. jury would not be misled by counsel's complaints that a grave charge had been made without proof. They would observe that facts had been given in evidence which were in substance unchallenged and which pointed to the prisoner's guilt. They would also observe that evidence had been given to weaken the strongest part of the case and other evidence which would disprove it all. He made it plain that he did not think much of the explanation of the tooth. He treated the alibi with more respect. If they believed the witnesses for the defence, the foundation of the charge, that Clark had been at the shop at the time of the burglary. was destroyed. They must consider that evidence carefully and the evidence as a whole.

"Fair little beggar, isn't he?" Reggie smiled. "He knows Clark did it all right."

"He knows what your evidence is worth," Finchampstead growled. "That's a direction to acquit."

"I know. I know," Reggie murmured. He gazed pensively at the man in the dock. The gap where the tooth had been showed

in a queer, sneering grin.

The jury did not consider long. came back with a verdict of not guilty, and at the words a cheer rose from the back of the crowded court, rose louder, to the impotent rage of the little Judge, as it was swelled by a boom of cheering from the crowd outside.

"I told you so, Lomas," Finchampstead growled. "You've made a nice thing of it. This is what comes of relying on Fortune's theories."

"No, it isn't. It comes of doing one's job," said Lomas. "Well, let's get away before they tear us limb from limb. Where is Fortune?" But Mr. Fortune had gone.

On the next day a young man on a motorbicycle stopped at the "Billhook" for lunch. His clothes were loud, his speech Cockney. He confided in the landlord that he was having his fortnight off: mooching round the country on the old jigger: rather thought of putting up somewhere for a bit. The landlord, who looked like the morning after a wet night, said the "Billhook" had no beds. "Sorry. You got some good beer. 'Ave one with me." The landlord had one and another. "Prime stuff. I'll be coming this way again, dad," the young man winked. "Cheerio!" He rode off and found a bed in Gilsfield. He was Mr. Fortune's chauffeur, Sam, a young man of versatility.

The country round the "Billhook" is lonely, a picturesque and barren region of sandhills which grew heath by nature and have been made to grow larch and pine. Here and there the ponds, which such country is apt to produce, give variety to the vegetation. About this time a botanist, complete with vasculum, was noticed working over the heath. The solitary woodmen and gamekeepers found him affable. He was Mr. Fortune.

Sam continued to mooch round, and he often recurred to the bar of the "Billhook," and the men who used it agreed that he was a lad.

From them his bicycle took him often to the hotel in the county town where Mr. Fortune unostentatiously resided.

They had been rusticating thus for something more than a week, and Sam was sitting in the "Billhook" at lunch when he heard the telephone ring. "Yes," the landlord's wheezy voice answered; "yes, this is the 'Billhook.' I'm the landlord. What?" His voice made throaty noises. "Don't know what you mean. Who's that speaking? Who is it?" There was a silence. Then a rattling of the telephone. "I say, miss, who was that rang me up?" And again silence.

Sam finished his lunch and went into the bar. The landlord was gulping down a glass of brandy; his hand shook and his face was a mottled yellow. Sam grinned. "And I'll 'ave a spot o' sloe gin myself, guv'nor." He was served without a word and his money was taken. The landlord watched him go out, shut the door and went back to the telephone.

In the evening Sam related these events to Mr. Fortune. "It gave 'im a rare turn, sir. Pity you can't over'ear what's coming from the other end of the telephone."

"Don't worry," Reggie murmured. "And then?"

"Well, then 'e went back to the telephone and rung up someone and 'ad a long talk. 'E saw me off the premises first careful, so I don't know who that was. But I 'ung about down the road an' presently 'e came out and 'e went walking round by that old pond under the wood. Sort o' mooning about. Didn't do anything. Just starin' like. And then 'e came back lookin' that queer."

Over Reggie's face came a slow benign smile. "No. No. He couldn't do anything," he murmured. "Now we'll do a little more telephoning. Good-bye, Sam. I'm afraid you'll have a night out. I want the 'Billhook' watched to-night."

"All right, sir. I'd love to do the blighter in. The beastly swipes I've drunk in his place! But what do you mean, more telephoning? That message 'e 'ad——'"

"Oh, yes. Yes. That was me. Goodbye."

As soon as it grew dark Sam went into hiding behind a clump of gorse in the road above the "Billhook." He saw the regular drinkers of that respectable inn arrive and cheerily depart. At the legal hour the "Billhook" closed its door and the light behind the red blind of its bar went out. Two lights upstairs announced that the landlord and his maid-of-all-work had gone to bed. Then those lights also vanished, and the inn was a vague mass in the dark.

The night was silent but for the whirr of bats and an owl hooting. After a while Sam made out the beat of a motor engine far away, a bicycle engine efficiently silenced. It came nearer at a great pace, rushed past him, stopped at the inn, and without a knock or a word the door opened and the man and the bicycle were inside.

For a moment Sam thought he heard a car purring down the road, then lost the sound. But soon other faint sounds came.

A man was nearly treading on him, a hand felt for him, a torch flashed into his face. "All right, son," a voice whispered. "I'm Bell." The bulk of the Superintendent lay down at Sam's side. "You've got a good nerve. Anything doing?"

"Not 'alf," Sam muttered. "Chap and his motor-bike gone into the pub. Couldn't

see him."

"Don't you worry." "But what's up, sir?"

"Search me. No more talk now."

They lay there some while longer. a light came out of the inn, a stable lantern in a man's hand. He was the landlord. With him walked a smaller man, who carried a spade on his shoulder. They turned off the road. "'Ere," Sam gripped at Bell, "goin' down by the pond. That's where the old 'un went this afternoon. What's

the game?"

"Shut up," Bell muttered. He let the two go well ahead before he stood up. Four other men rose out of the ground behind him. They moved on towards the pond silently. The lantern light was glimmering over the water: there was a squelching, splashing sound. The landlord stood in the pond a little way from the bank, digging, and the other man held the lantern. Something came away with a gurgling and sucking, which took two hands to lift, was taken out of the water and the landlord hurried away with it, leaving his companion to bring lantern and spade.

As they came, Bell turned his torch on them, and other torches flashed out. They were held in the glare while his men closed. "We're police officers," said Bell, with a heavy grip on the landlord's arm. "Now,

what have you got for us?"

"Oh, police, are you?" It was the other man who answered. "Going to make another bloomer, then?"

"I know you, Clark," Bell said.
"You bloomin' well do, Mr. bloomin' Superintendent. An' you know you can't do anything more against me. I've been found not guilty, I have, and you can't touch me. I know my rights and I ain't going to stand for any rough stuff. Come off it."

"And this is your alibi," Bell said mildly. "Well, what's he giving us now?" He took from the landlord's shaking arms a big "Thanks. Bring 'em back to metal box. the pub."

"Now, what do you think you're doing?" Clark cried. "You've got no right to pinch me again. You can't touch me. I tell you—" One of the detectives, hustling him along, advised him to stow the gab. "You wait till I get to my lawyer, you bloomin' stiff. I'll have the hide off you for this. I'll have you turned out of the force."

"Want to talk now, Clark?" said Bell. "Let it out. You hadn't much to say last

"I want to know what the bally charge is?" Clark growled.

Bell laughed. "Well, what is it?" He held up the box. "Seems heavy."

They came into the bar of the "Billhook" and the lamps were lit. Bell looked at his prisoners. The landlord's fat face sagged pallid. Clark scowled. "Going to give me the key?" Bell tapped the box.

"I dunno nothing about it," the landlord whined. "I-I was jus' keeping it for-"

"Don't you say anything, George," Clark said quickly. "He'll only twist it against

"Yes, who were you keeping it for, George?" Bell smiled. There was no answer. "All right. I dare say we can tell you. Put 'em in there." He opened the door of the bar parlour.

"Here, now, wait a bit. What's the charge?" Clark protested.

"Detained on suspicion," Bell said.
"Oh, yes, I don't think. You had that

"And now I've got some more," Bell said, and the two were taken away. "Well, Forbes, what about it?"

One of his men was already opening the box. It was full of a bundle in leather cloth. Out of that came jewellery. Forbes spread out a printed list and began to examine things. "This is Durfey and

Killigrew's stuff all right, sir."

"Good work," said Bell, and went to the telephone. "That Mr. Fortune? Bell speaking. We've got 'em, sir. With the stuff. They had it buried in this pond here. What, sir? You don't mean—?" He brushed his hand over his face. "Very good, sir. I'll keep 'em here." He hung up the receiver. He sat down heavily and lit a pipe. It took many matches. . . .

Until dawn they waited in the inn, a long watch broken by the complaints of Clark. With the light came a car. Mr. Fortune and Lomas and the Chief Constable of the County. "Hallo, Bell." Reggie was brisk.

Nobody else in the place?

"There's a woman servant upstairs, Sam

says. I haven't got her up, sir. She seems

to have slept through it.'

"Yes. Been trained not to hear too much. Well, one of your men had better take her off. We shall want her statement. Don't let her see these fellows. I——"

A lorry groaned past the door.

"Well, let's get on, what?" He turned "When I want these two beauties I'll whistle."

Through the window of the bar parlour the sharp red face of Mr. Clark could be seen peering after the lorry. It carried some country policemen in uniform. As near the pond as it could get, it stopped. The policemen clambered down and hauled out a cumbrous apparatus of iron and rope.

The Chief Constable strode up to the pond. "It's not so big, Mr. Fortune. We'll soon make sure one way or the other."

"Yes, yes." Reggie walked round the bank and measured distances with his eye. "We're going to make quite sure. They couldn't throw him further than this. Begin from here and work towards that end."

The drags were put in and the constabulary hauled and the black water grew turbid and yellow. The ropes strained. "Got something," the Chief Constable grunted. "Go steady, lads." Out of the depths of the pond into the shallows came a shapeless mass of cloth. Policemen splashed in and lifted on to the bank something that had been a man.

Lomas turned away. The Chief Constable pulled out a flask and drank and passed it to his men. Reggie knelt down by the body. . . . When he stood up again he dabbled his hands in the pond. you blow a whistle, Lomas? "he murmured.

The Chief Constable did that.

chap you were looking for ?"

"Oh, yes. Gold teeth, as per invoice. The late Harvey Stroud.

"Was he drowned?" said Lomas.

"No, not drowned. Skull fractured. Injury to bones of the face. Hit and jabbed by hard, heavy weapon. Same like the porter. Ah, here come the operators." Under the propulsion of Bell's men, Mr. Clark and the landlord reluctantly approached. "Come along," Reggie called. "Just want you to recognise the deceased."

The landlord caught sight of that shapeless face and gave a gasping cry and swayed round, hanging on the arms that held him.

"Yes. Your error," Reggie said. He contemplated the little red face of Percy Clark. Its look of impudence was fixed,

but his jaws worked fast. "Still chewing gum, Mr. Clark?"

Then Clark swore at him. . . .

That afternoon the Public Prosecutor was asked to come and see the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. He found Mr. Fortune with Lomas. "My dear old Finch," Reggie beamed. "Journeys end in lovers meetin'. And now we live happily ever after. You've been so useful. How wonderful that is! But how gratifyin'! Another nice case for you now."

"Good heavens!" Finchampstead exploded. "Another case of yours? I should have thought that last exhibition was sufficiently ignominious. What is this,

now?"

"Percy Clark, dear. Yet once more, oh ye laurels, and once more."

"Are you mad? You can't charge the

man again."

"Not the same murder. No. This is another one. And thus we will establish your shaken reputation, Finch."

" Mv reputation!" Finchampstead

gobbled.

"Yes, old thing. Yes, it was too bad." Reggie soothed him. "But necessary, you know. All for your country's good. We had to prosecute the beggar. We had to make him show his hand. And you did it beautifully, Finch."

"What does this mean, Lomas?" Finch-

ampstead groaned.

"He's quite right," Lomas chuckled. "He generally is, confound him. Don't you see the prosecution drove Clark into a corner. His only chance was to set up that alibi. And the alibi gave him away.

"It was perjured evidence? I dare say. If you hadn't been so hasty——"

"Not hasty. No. Forcin' the game," Reggie smiled. "When he put that fat landlord into the box, he put the rope round his neck. We had it sworn that he was a pal of the landlord's, and that he'd been at the 'Billhook' on the evening of the burglary. So I went down with my chauffeur to look into the landlord. And we found another fellow came to the 'Billhook' that night. A tall, dark fellow who came in a car, went into a back room with the landlord and Mr. Clark, and was never seen to go away. His car was there days after. Well, you know, there was a man reported missing from that Saturday who had interests in burglary—Mr. Harvey Stroud. Bell was always worrying about him. Bell thought he might be the man who put up

the job. It looked as if he was. We knew the murder of the porter wasn't according to plan. If Mr. Stroud came quietly down to the 'Billhook' to collect the swag and found he'd been mixed up in a murder, he wouldn't be pleased. There might well have been a row. Another little affair not according to plan. So I rang up the landlord and said, 'What's become of Harvey Stroud?' Only that and nothing more. Just to see the reaction. He reacted very nicely. He gargled. Then my man saw him go out and wander round the adjacent pond, just looking at things. And then he went back and telephoned to Mr. Clark. Soon as the evening shades prevailed, Clark buzzed down to the 'Billhook.' In the

night they went out and dug the swag out of the pond. And Bell got 'em with the goods all present and correct."

"We can convict them of the burglary,

then?" said Finchampstead.

"Oh, yes. Yes. And the murder of Stroud. We dragged the pond this morning. Harvey Stroud was there with his head bashed in and his pockets full of stones. And now your fat friend the landlord is coughing up confessions."

"I always knew that rascal Clark was guilty," Finchampstead announced. "This

is very satisfactory, Fortune."
"Yes, I think so," Mr. Fortune murmured. "One of my neater cases. Pure art. No vulgar emotion."

A ROSY STAR.

EVERY night there will arise A rose-red star of the Eastern skies; And as the shadows gather in Round heather, holt and lin, Red sparks from the gypsy's fires soar Over the misty moor.

Ash and oak and willow tree Throw their fragrance over me; Carry their fragrance aloft and afar Toward the rose-red star! Red sparks from the gypsy's fires soar Over the moonlit moor.

And all as the fires blaze and burn Breaths from the willow boughs return, And nut-sweet scents of the gorse brands stir Upward, with the sap o' the fir;

Red sparks from the gypsy's fires soar Over the wild dark moor.

Every night there will arise This rose-red star of the Eastern skies; And as the gloaming closes round Moss and whin and broom-patch ground, Red sparks from the gypsy's fires soar Over the windy moor; . . .

And a rosy dream enters at my heart's door!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE

By B. L. JACOT

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

9

ROM down in the oak-sombred hall of Great-aunt Jessica's Carolian mansion drifted sounds of reception. The scrape of suitcases newly arrived, that uncertain pause which comes with the transfer of hat and coat to the safe-keeping of the butler, reached Great-aunt Jessica's sharp ear up in her favourite room at the head of the wide-swept staircase distantly.

"They've come," breathed Venn, more to herself. But Great-aunt Jessica caught that too. In spite of her four-score years and three Great-aunt Jessica missed little.

"They?" she inquired, raising her eyebrows.

Her great-niece shot an exploring glance at that silvered figure sitting like the Portrait of Whistler's Mother upright in her high-backed chair. "It sounds," she offered quickly, "it sounds as if Freddie had brought—a friend."

Great-aunt Jessica had not missed that shade of confusion. Nineteen against eighty-three, and Venn had lived with Great-aunt Jessica for precisely eighteen years and four months.

"It does," pronounced Great-aunt Jessica ominously. "It does." From the stronghold of her patrician head, an autocratic, undimmed, but not unkindly eye raked her evasive niece as if attempting to fix a memory. Apparently with success. "And that friend," added Great-aunt Jessica, more ominously yet, "unless I am grossly in error, has a familiar voice. A disgustingly familiar voice. I hope I am wrong."

Great-aunt Jessica was never wrong. The last time—the only previous time—Great-aunt Jessica had heard that voice, she called its owner a variety of names, ranging from an officious idiot to an incompetent imbecile—and worse. Venn made no attempt to

avoid the question in her Great-aunt's interrogative eyes.

"He has," she said. "It—it is."

Great-aunt Jessica's lips tightened into her I-knew-I-was-right expression. "And what on earth," she demanded, with reason, "is that red-headed lunatic doing in my house?"

Venn had courage—she was of the same high-spirited stock as Great-aunt Jessica. "He is not a lunatic," she retorted. "And he was only doing his best to help in the train."

"Don't argue with me, child. I will not have it. He was a lunatic. Undoubtedly he still is. And he is red-headed." The butler appeared at the door, but Great-aunt Jessica ignored him utterly. Her faculties were focussed elsewhere. "That imbecile," pursued Great-aunt Jessica with conscious deliberation. "That red-headed imbecile called me a jelly-bellied pelican. That, one would have thought, would be sufficient."

"You called him a red-headed ruffian," Venn defended quickly. "And before that you had called him all sorts of things—and

he was only trying to be polite."

"I have never," recorded Great-aunt Jessica, unmoved, "been called a jelly-bellied pelican before. And I have no wish to be called a jelly-bellied pelican again. Why, may I ask, have you invited this man to my house?"

"Freddie has brought him," invented

Venn opportunely, "to apologise."

"He wants to apologise, does he?" Great-aunt Jessica's undimmed eyes wandered belligerently towards the door. "Well, let him! Let us see if he has the courage. I admire courage. Let us have a look at your red-headed friend! He'll need courage. If——"

"I'll fetch him." She was half-way to

the door where Blades, the butler, was still standing deferentially, when the age-silvered

spinster in the chair stopped her.

"You will not," she said. "You fetched that lunatic out of the corridor in the first instance—where he had been loitering for hours. Ever since Dijon, in fact. Oh, I saw the poor creature! You need not deny Windows in French railway carriages are made to stick, and the carriages themselves are constructed to be cooked in steam. Had you called the controlleur instead of struggling to open that huge sheet of glass yourself, your red-headed lunatic would never have intruded, and smashed itsmashed it and called me a pelican for my pains—to say nothing of having to pay for it, and change carriages, and travel with a fat Frenchman with corns and a woman who certainly was not his wife, and the compartment full of steam, of course, and the windows shut again, naturally, and the controlleur abusive when-"

"They are still waiting in the hall."

Great-aunt Jessica clicked her lips shut, thrusting the recollection from her. Turning to the patient Blades, she clicked them open again. "Show Mr. Frederick and his companion up here," she commanded; then, crossing her white hands in her black silk lap, she arranged neat narrow feet on the footstool, and waited.

There was a good deal of pride about Great-aunt Jessica. She was proud of her ankles, slim still, and silk-clad: she was proud of her teeth, small, white, and natural: she was proud of her eyes, her ears, competent in spite of long Victorian years to deal with the world unassisted. Her hands, she frequently pointed out, were of a forgotten era. Long, delicate, blue-traced under the ivory-skin, she was proudest perhaps of these. There was a good deal of pride about Great-aunt Jessica.

A good deal—and Venetia, anticipating contact with that impetuous red-head, comforted herself with the oft-conjured thought that it simply had to be. It simply Could Not Wait.

Now Blades was stepping adroitly aside to allow the procession to enter. "Mr. Frederick," he said. "Mr. Austin Mac-Illivray Bullocke," he said.

Venn drew a precious breath, and held it close. Of this red-headed follower in her cousin's train she had dreamt ecstatically for some three weeks.

"Hello, Aunt Jessica!" began Cousin Frederick, in error from the start. "This is my old friend, Bullocke. I bumped into him by chance, so I——"

"Don't lie to me, Frederick," interrupted Great-aunt Jessica. "Your father was a poor liar, and you are worse. You haven't the brains for it. Why not say outright that Venn wrote to you and asked you to make your visits here an excuse for bringing that—that man there who appears to be taking a meal from the ends of his fingers?"

Her great-nephew shifted his feet awkwardly. "She telephoned," he said.

"Lady Jessica—" began the red-headed young man, but she cut him short with an imperious gesture.

"I am coming to you, young man," she said. "Step up and let us have a look at

you."

Austin Bullocke moved over an intervening length of carpet. Undeniably he had red hair. His wrists reminded Great-aunt Jessica of the legs of shire horses. Holding his eyes steadily, she saw that easy, smiling blue that goes for facile friendships: but she caught, too, an uncontrollable flash-a smouldering beacon of that jelly-bellied pelican outburst. Just the sort of man to smash windows with his elbows, thought Great-aunt Jessica; the sort of cart-horsing creature who cannot cross a drawing-room without treading on a grand piano and putting his foot through two or three chairs. Which was true, for Great-aunt Jessica was always right.

"Well, and what have you got to say,

young man?"

Austin Bullocke thought. Some weeks now since he had met Venetia Deering, but it still gave him an exquisite pain under the left flap of his double-breasted coat when he trapped a fragrant memory of her. Tact, it had been impressed upon his hotheaded ensemble, was the golden key to this difficult but altogether unpostponable visit.

"Well," repeated the spinster. "What

have you got to say?"

"Good afternoon," he offered.

Great-aunt Jessica, enthroned upon her high-backed chair and the footstool, stiffened. "That," she replied, "you would have offered five minutes ago, had you any manners, which you have not. Is there anything else?"

Austin considered. "Yes. That is, I trust I find you well..." When first he had swum into Venetia Deering's ken he had looked with apprehension on this formidable, parchment-faced old lady—and that he had done anonymously through the

corridor window of a railway compartment. Now, at home in her great rambling country house, with her rows of family portraits and luxuriance of family silver, Great-aunt Jessica looked more formidable still.

"I am in perfect health, thank you,

Mr.——"

"Bullocke," supplied Venn, anxiously, from the windows.

"Mr. Bullocke," continued Great-aunt Jessica. "Was there anything else?"

From the window came a desperate dumb

hint. Austin translated it.

"I wanted to say, Lady Jessica, how sorry I am I called you—that is to say—I said . . ."

"Speak out," urged Great-aunt Jessica.
"I hate cowards. You are sorry you called me what?"

"A-a pelican."

"A pelican," confirmed Great-aunt Jessica, apparently with relish. "An odd epithet. Not apt. Puerile. A schoolboy could have done better. I suppose they called you 'ginger' at school?"

Austin nodded, colouring darkly. It was his tender subject, for Great-aunt Jessica

was right.

"Well, Mr. Ginger," pursued the Lady Jessica Deering, "I suppose you think that you have now qualified to make free with my house?"

For a moment Austin struggled, but tact prevailed. He saw the catch in the question. He could say neither yes nor no. He glowered at his shoes, twin violin-cases.

Great-aunt Jessica tried again. "It has not, I suppose, escaped your notice that I am a woman of some wealth and property. You are aware, too, no doubt, that Venetia is mentioned in my will as heiress to my estate. You are to be congratulated in having lost little time in following up your

initial advantage."

"Aunt Jessica!" Venn arrived from the windows simultaneously with the words. Her cheeks were scarlet. How Great-aunt Jessica had once slapped the face of her butler from the head of the table while entertaining a company of distinguished guests which included a Personage was still related in the county. But she had never done anything like this before. "How could you say a thing like that!"

"Let Mr. Ginger," commanded Greataunt Jessica, "speak for himself. Surely he is large enough. Well, Mr. Ginger?"

But Mr. Ginger at that moment was having considerable difficulty with his speech.

He had never expected anything like this. And, in addition, moments of tense emotion, by some trick of Nature, always brought with them an unconquerable impediment in his speech. He stammered in moments of crisis. Three shots it had taken him to relieve himself of the historic pelican epithet. Now he was as far from coherent words as a man with his mouth full of cake.

"P—perp," he said. "C—cuc—cuckuck

 $\operatorname{\mathsf{--Corks.}}$

"Corks?" echoed Great-aunt Jessica, interested.

"When Austin is upset he stammers,"

Venn explained.

Great-aunt Jessica shook her head, turning from the perfect, lily-cool oval of her niece's face to the beetroot contortion of her visitor's. "What an unfortunate young man," she sighed. "But before he bursts, however, let me tell him this. If he thinks I am going to have him thrown out of this house, as he richly deserves, he is wrong. He may stay as long as he likes." She was addressing the rich tapestries before her, impersonally. "Don't let him consider me. Frederick's father," added Great-aunt Jessica more distantly yet, "on one occasion brought home an intoxicated bookmaker for me to entertain. I do not anticipate any difficulty in entertaining Mr. Ginger."

In three cart-horsing strides the redheaded young man had joined Venn before the throne. Lines of demarcation between hair and complexion were now completely lost. He looked as if about to raise a threatening fist. Certainly his large mouth

was widespread.

"Don't say it!" cried Venn. "Don't

try to-please, Austin!"

He shut his mouth with a click, and tugged fiercely at his tie, still fixing Greataunt Jessica flamingly.

"She doesn't really mean it. It's only her way——" She pulled at his arm per-

suasively.

With fragile white wrists crossed in her lap, Great-aunt Jessica was smiling at him serenely—a finely etched picture in black lace and old lavender.

"Yes," she said. "Take Mr. Ginger away, Venn, and give him tea in the library. At any rate, he has spirit, poor creature."

Hurriedly Venn piloted him from the presence. His large mouth was loyally clamped close, but his ears were still twitching. At the door Great-aunt Jessica called a halt.

"Give him tea," she repeated. "But keep an eye on the silver."

CUCH was the official welcome of Austin MacIllivray Bullocke to Faveringe Hall, Salop. To state that it took him by surprise is to put it mildly, for he was unaware that his invitation had been unofficial. He was ashamed of his outburst in that French train. Whatever the provocation, an old lady is an old lady. But, considering that Great-aunt Jessica had had a full three-minute innings of invective as against his single explosive utterance, he had been prepared to find the incident decently buried -consigned to the past through the agency of this friendly invitation. That evening after dinner he took up the matter with Venn.

"She is peculiar in a lot of ways," said Venn. "I think—think she is very fond of me. But she has never been like this before. I can't understand it."

And Austin, puzzled, ran a hand—the size of a briar-root and about as brown—through his ginger thatch. "But—hang it all! What I mean is, she's jolly fond of you, of course. I'd like to see anyone who wasn't. But look at what she said. I don't see how a fellow can stay after that."

The girl in the leather chair facing him trailed her heavily fringed eyes round the platform which encircled the library walls half-way up the book-shelves. "You can't go back to London to-night," she said. Twice in London she had found herself at the same dance as this man; once she had let him take her to the Ritz for tea; and once with a party he had taken her to a theatre and on to the Embassy Club to dance. Since when, returning to Great-aunt Jessica's house, she had spent ten proprietary days composing sparkling dialogue, scintillating with wit, to weave round him. In that moment when he had crashed an elbow through that plate-glass slab something had come up out of the void and pinned Venetia close under the heart—in the way that something has with those who are young, fragrant, and susceptible.

"No," said Venn firmly, "you can't go

back to-night."

"To-morrow—" he began, and stopped abruptly, as though the word had opened up a new avenue of conjecture.

"To-morrow?" echoed Venn unhappily.

"I was just thinking."

Not much sparkle about this dialogue. And to-morrow . . .

"She didn't come down to dine this evening," mused Austin. "She said I could stay as long as I liked——"

Great-aunt Jessica indeed had only made one brief appearance since the audience in her room upstairs. As dinner was announced by Blades she had presented herself among her guests to make a personal plea to be excused that evening. And against every wish Austin had been forced to admit a reluctant admiration at the grace of this old-world courtesy. In her days, girls had been taught how to carry themselves. Great-aunt Jessica had learnt well, and with her long years brought the business to polished perfection. He remembered beautiful fingers aglitter with diamonds, silver hair knotted at the back of her neck, a further sprinkle of the famous Deering diamonds on the black lace at her throat, then a simple curtsey, full of grace, and that slim upright figure drifting out through the servants at the door. Great-aunt Jessica, he registered then unwittingly, fitted in with the feudal atmosphere of her great house surely enough.

"She has these moods," Venn was urging. "For years no one has dared to contradict her—or go against her wishes. No one except me—and with me it comes to the same thing in the end. If she says I'm not to do a thing, and I say I will, when I come to do it I find it's impossible—or that I don't really want to do it—or something.

Maybe to-morrow——"

"For years," he insisted, "she has had you for a slave, and all these servants in

stockings and velvet bags-"

With a loyal shake of the head she interrupted him firmly. "That's not fair! She has been more than kind to me—and there was no obligation whatsoever. I hadn't a blue bean, and I was just a name to her. Just a little baby from a nursing home."

"You were her kith and kin." He stopped as he saw her biting her lip, turning quickly to another trail. "Perhaps, since she has

never been married——"

"Great-aunt Jessica is a dear! Sometimes I think she's fonder of me than I am of her. She pretends not to, but I know she worries when I'm away. The only time I can remember her ill, was when I had scarlet fever as a child. Just worry. She runs her life to suit what she considers ought to be mine. She hates London, but she makes the journey every year so that I can enjoy the Season. And every year she takes me abroad—at her age! Switzerland—as you know: the Riviera: Biarritz..."



"'A-hem,' coughed Great-aunt Jessica. 'I trust I do not intrude?"



Austin shook his head in sympathy. "One thing is certain at any rate," he laughed. "She isn't very fond of me. I don't think she would be likely to worry if I went away! But I'm not going. Not vet."

He lumbered to his feet, and pulled her from the depths of her chair by the hand.

"When you get to know her," she pro-

phesied, "you'll love her."

But he was not ready for that. "Let's push along and tap the radio," he evaded. Maybe we can gather in a dance-band."

That laboriously compiled repertoire of brilliant small-talk! "Lovely!" she began carefully. "And listen to the saxophones calling on"-she hesitated, then continued firmly-" calling on the pagan gods of Africa."

A puzzled frown troubled his forehead. "Africa?" he repeated. "What I meant was, have a bit of a hop, what?"

"Yes," she agreed quickly. "Let's."

F Austin imagined Great-aunt Jessica was going to ignore his presence at Faveringe Hall, he was wrong. Great-aunt Jessica avoided nothing. Returning from a prebreakfast ramble round the parklands, Austin came on her putting an octogenarian gardener through the elements of his craft. A bunch of flowers, which he had obviously gathered, lay in her hand.

"Well, Mr. Ginger?" she began, dismissing the man, Austin guessed, to make way for the insult. "An early riser, I

see?"

He eyed her suspiciously. On the face of it there seemed no innuendo in this. bowed.

"Still in your naughty temper? No?" She allowed him to take the bunch of flowers and carry it for her. "But still here." laughed. "Either your skin must be thick —as skin is liable to be nowadays—or else you must be very much attached to Venn. Tell me, which is it, Mr. Ginger?"

He bit his lip, and, fixing his eyes on the distant diamond chimneys of the house. said: "I am very much attached to your

great-niece."

He realised as he said it how stilted it sounded, but he did not expect Great-aunt

Jessica to laugh.

"Gracious me!" she exclaimed. "It has quite a romantic eloquence when it is not stammering, has our gallant Mr. Ginger! Continue, my dear young man. Finish it."

Austin kicked at the grass dumbly. Pre-

cious epithets were rattling up hard against the back of his incisors, but he kept his teeth firmly shut.

"Say: 'Whom I have the aspiration to

hold in great esteem and regard."

Austin levered up his teeth a fraction. "I won't," he said. He shut them quickly. "Tut, tut! Still in its nasty temper, is

it?" inquired Great-aunt Jessica playfully. "Has it heard from its inquiry agents that Venn cannot marry without my consent until she's of age? Or is it frightened I shall alter my will? I shall never do that, Mr. Ginger! If that is any comfort to you."

Control edged away from Austin. His neck swelled. "Ker—" he began. "Ker—enckenck—"

-cuc-cuckcuck-

"Surely not corks again?" inquired Greataunt Jessica.

He fanned the air with his arms. corks—corks—cuck-cuck-corks," \mathbf{he}

"Gracious me!" Great-aunt affected surprise. "It seems a favourite trick of self-expression." She shook her head. "Plato-or was it Socrates ?-used to try pebbles in the mouth. You have my permission, Mr. Ginger, to pick any you choose from the flower-beds. Last night when you bowed to me, I had hopes of you. You remember? But now that I see you once more in the daylight I find you dross. Dross, Mr. Ginger. But I must find Venn."

She drifted away across the lawns, her white hands gloved, keeping step with her ebony stick with a poise that made an art of walking. From watching the retreating figure, Austin turned to the bouquet in his hands. Something about the grace of the distant figure prevented him from jumping on it. He remembered now that a gleam of approval had come to her eyes when he had bowed ceremoniously in reply to her curtsey last night. Freddie, he recalled, had gaped like a fish. It made him feel an unconscious shade proud of that bow.

Great-aunt Jessica found Venn alone in the breakfast-room, lifting the covers questingly on the sideboard. They met in an embrace—like everything else in Great-aunt Jessica's house, strictly according to schedule.

"I have been enjoying such a charming talk with your Mr. Ginger," said Great-aunt Jessica. "He is carrying my flowers, but an impediment in the speech put an end to our conversation. I thought," she added unexpectedly, "that you told me he played

A warm glow of enthusiasm invaded Venn.

"He does," she replied. "He plays for Kent."

"Delightful! The Garden of England!"

"And last year he was picked to play in a Test Match, but he sprained his wrist."

"A Test Match?"

"To play," breathed Venn, "for his coun-

try. To play for England."
"England?" queried Great-aunt Jessica. "I thought our Mr. Ginger was a Scot?" "He is." For a moment Venn considered.

"But they don't play cricket in Scotland. At least I don't see how they could."

Great-aunt Jessica raised a Georgian silver lid and surveyed sausages for a moment in silence. "This cricket interests me," she said at length. "How can he play if he stammers?"

"Stammers?" Aunt Jessica was unusually puzzling that morning. "How can stammering make any difference in cricket?"

"I thought," suggested Great-aunt Jessica—"I thought that when one hit the ball with the racket and ran, as I have seen them do many a time at Lord's, that on arriving one had to cry, 'Wickets!' Correct me if I am wrong.

"I don't think they have to do that now,

Aunt Jessica."

"No? Then no doubt our Mr. Ginger is a very fine cricketer." For a moment Great-aunt Jessica stood looking thoughtfully into the flood from the stained-glass windows, silhouetted unconsciously in the slanting light like a Tintoretto. "And, tell me, child, are you-fond of cricketers?"

Venn nodded dumbly. Great-aunt Jessica absorbed the movement without turn-

ing her head.

I always found them slightly absurd in their silk hats," she said. "I once saw your grandfather play for Oxford. I distinctly recall him crying, 'Wickets!' But perhaps the change is for the best. So you are fond of these cricketers? Well, well. And how long would it be since you saw our Mr. Ginger Test Match Cricketer-for the first time, I mean?"

"Forty-three days," Venn told her.

"This is the forty-fourth."

"Ah," sighed Great-aunt Jessica. suddenly she became very still. "I recall counting the days once. A long time ago. But I had to count many more than fortythree. . . . Many more, my dear. And that disgraceful morning in the train—was that the first time you met him? Don't be afraid of me, now!"

"Yes. I had never seen him before that."

Great-aunt Jessica shook her head. "Pelican," she said. "A jelly-bellied pelican. How coarse! How inapt! Tell me, child, do you think I resemble in any way the bird that red-headed ruffian mentioned?"

"Austin was excited. He didn't know what he was saving. Of course you don't

look like a pelican, Aunt Jessica!"

Great-aunt Jessica sighed. "Thank you, Venn," she said. "And now you may choose me one very small sausage and half a partridge. I have a presentiment that I shall need sustaining food to-day."

THAT day the châtelaine orbit of Great-aunt Jessica touched once only into that of her guests. In that ancestorlined dining-room, with its doors concealed in the panelling and its gallery, she dined that night, and the ceremony left Austin with a reminiscent parallel. The touchy tension of dining at High Table in his college hall.

The three days that followed, like the first, were open-air days. Venn was a keen fisherman, as was her cousin, Freddie. Austin spent care-free days developing the art with them in the lazy stream that loitered through the parklands to drift under the boundary that marked off Great-aunt Jessica's estate from that of her neighbour, the General. Nevertheless, Austin felt that the shadow of his grim hostess was never far away. Great-aunt Jessica brooded over him, a watchful presence, but even that could not arrest the sweeping development of his emotions where Venn was concerned. He had to acknowledge now that he never wanted to go away.

Something of this must have communicated itself to Great-aunt Jessica. As Venn was dressing for dinner, against all prece-

dent, she drifted into her room.

"I suppose," began Great-aunt Jessica abruptly, "that you think you are very much in love with our Mr. Test Match Ginger?"

There was no evasion about Venn. Greataunt Jessica had taught her nothing if she had not impressed the truth that honesty to oneself is as important as honesty to others. "Yes," said Venn, "I do."

"Your mother's cousin once fell in love with a policeman," recalled Great-aunt Jes-"Well, well. And you have never been in love with anyone before?"

Venn was glad her maid had been dis-"Never," she replied, which was literally the truth.

"One has to be sure, Venn. One has to be sure."

"I am sure, Aunt Jessica."

For a silent moment the old lady lingered over the slim loveliness of her great-niece. It seemed to give her satisfaction. "If you have never been in love before, Venn, how can you tell?"

Venn laughed. It had all the music of a happy bell, but Great-aunt Jessica winced at the sound of it. "How can I tell? How can I tell I'm alive at this minute? I've

never been alive before."

"It is different with love, Venn. Happiness is no test. You do not know whether you love or not until—until things go wrong. That is the searching test. When things go wrong with a man, it is then you have to decide whether you will stand by him—or listen to the others. What all the world says about him, I mean. . . ."

To Venn it seemed then that Great-aunt Jessica was on the verge of breaking through into a closely guarded subject. The subject of that gallantly bewhiskered photograph in a diplomat's uniform on Great-aunt Jessica's dressing-table. Like the portrait itself, that subject was never touched. But Venn was wrong.

"I have been finding out such a lot of things about Mr. Ginger," said Great-aunt

Jessica significantly.

"You—you mean you have been making inquiries?"

"I have. Naturally."

"Aunt Jessica!"

"He seems," pursued Great-aunt Jessica serenely, "singularly free from entanglements. He lives with his mother in Scotland. Well connected, and quite well off. One hears he started off in the Scots Guards, but took to cricket because of his stammer. Poor creature! He is," concluded Great-aunt Jessica, "a nephew of that hooligan, General MacIllivray, our neighbour here. As, indeed, one might expect."

For twelve years warfare had raged between the Lady Jessica and General Sir Bindon MacIllivray. Venn had hoped that the relationship would never come to light. "It is not Austin's fault," she defended.

"No," agreed Great-aunt Jessica. "Just another of his misfortunes. But I must not make you late. Mr. Test Match Ginger is no doubt eating his heart out downstairs..."

Great-aunt Jessica did not dine downstairs that night. Austin was more than usually relieved. He had found that he had something to say to Venn: something that could not wait: could not possibly wait. Freddie was easy, since college days he had always been obliging.

And in the library, after dinner, Austin

said it. . . .

What he said, swept as he was by emotion, was largely: "corks." But Venn understood.

"Oh, Austin!" she breathed, and in the pink radiance of Great-aunt Jessica's dimly lit library her face, upturned, seemed to him as a pale flower. Her lips were parted: her eyes shining like twin tapers of the night.

"Oh, Venn!" he whispered, coherent

now, and pressed her lips.

Came a rustle from behind, and a cough.
"A-hem," coughed Great-aunt Jessica.
"I trust I do not intrude?"

Austin leapt round. "Lady Jessica—" he began, as any young man should in similar circumstances. But Great-aunt Jessica waved it all aside.

"I was looking for a book, Mr. Ginger,"

For a moment he held her eye levelly. "Can—can I get it for you?"

"I find, Mr. Ginger, that I no longer require it. I will wish you good night."

She went as suddenly as she had come. And Venn went with her.

LATER that night Austin walked with Freddie on the terraces. "Venn says she was wearing that diamond wristlet," mentioned Austin.

"The one from the vaults?"

" Yes."

Apart from owning some nine thousand acres of Shropshire, Great-aunt Jessica was proprietor of a fortune in small jewellery alone. When she told Austin that she was a woman of some wealth she made no overstatement. This particular diamond wristlet was insured for several thousand pounds.

"Batty," suggested Freddie. "In the ordinary way she only heaves it up for receptions and so on. It's worth a fortune.

What a chance for a——"

As if to mark the words Austin laid an urgent hand on his arm. "Did you see that?" he whispered tensely.

Freddie stared down into the bushes. What he saw was bushes, nothing else.

But Austin was staring fixedly. "Must be getting nervy with this talking of burglars," he laughed. "I could have sworn I saw a man dodge out of the bushes there as we approached." They laughed then at the thought of thieves in the night, but in the early hours of the morning they had little cause for laughter. The first Austin heard of it was vague shufflings in the corridor. Doors were opening, and people moving about. In his dressing-gown, on the broad first landing, he ran into Venn.

"It's Great-aunt Jessica," she said.

" TII ? "

Venn shook her head as she turned towards the door of the old lady's bedroom. "She's just sent a maid for me. Had her jewellery stolen . . ."

Blades, hurriedly assembled from sleep, came running up, knocked the door, and disappeared inside. When he came out

Austin questioned him.

"She kept her wristlet, sir, by the side of the bed instead of having it taken down to the vaults, and her ladyship woke in the night to find her windows open and the wristlet gone."

Immediately Austin thought of that man in the bushes, but he said nothing. "Is

there anything I can do?"

The butler shook his head. "Her ladyship particularly wants the affair kept quiet. I have instructions not to call in the police

until the morning."

For a while after the man had gone Austin reflected. But there seemed nothing he could do. He went back to bed. He rose early next morning to lend a helping hand, but he found that the others were up before him. He came on Great-aunt Jessica in the breakfast-room with Venn and Freddie. From the first he sensed something wrong.

"Absolute rot!" Freddie was stating,

firmly for him.

"It is obvious," retorted Great-aunt Jessica, "that whoever stole that wristlet knew that I was wearing it last night. A thing I rarely do."

Venn saw him first, and she bit her lip

for sname.

"Aunt Jessica," she said quickly, "is

saying— Oh, it's disgraceful!"

Great-aunt Jessica turned on the new arrival, and as she did so Venn saw in her face what she had never seen before. It almost seemed as if Great-aunt Jessica were afraid.

"Let me deal with Mr. Ginger," she said. "Freddie has been telling me about some

man in the bushes last night."

Austin inclined his head. "We saw—or thought we saw—someone clear out of our

way. He might have been watching the house."

"We?" queried Great-aunt Jessica.

"Freddie and I."

She turned deliberately to Freddie. "Did you see this—convenient—man?"

He shook his head. "But-"

Great-aunt Jessica waved him to silence. "Someone in the house is a thief," she said with painful deliberation. "The servants, of course, are above suspicion. In the circumstances," added Great-aunt Jessica—"in the circumstances one cannot call in the police."

Austin pulled himself together. Fantastic! But the old lady had described the man in the bushes as "convenient": she was watching him now narrowly; there was no mistaking this incredible accusa-

tion.

"One moment!" he cried, as Great-aunt Jessica made to move away. "One moment, Lady Jessica!" A cold remoteness of purpose had taken him now a step beyond flaming inarticulacy. "There is unfortunately no way of ignoring this—this idiotic suspicion—you have against me. I——"

"Austin!" cried Venn, but he thrust her

extended hand roughly aside.

"Mr. Ginger pleases to be——" began Great-aunt Jessica acidly, when she too was cut short. Incredibly, she submitted to interruption.

"Since I accepted the invitation to become your guest in this house it has pleased you to offer me nothing but insults. I stood them for Venn's sake. But I am not going to stand being called a thief and a liar to my face. I wish you all good-bye!"

Turning abruptly on his heel, he ploughed back towards his bedroom to pack. But a queer little cry from Venn stopped him. "Oh, Austin!—you can't go like this.

It's—it's too absurd . . ."

"I am not going to stay," he said roughly, then memories of a face upturned like a pale flower came to weaken him. "I am not going to stay," he repeated, "but I am going to ask you, Venn, to come with me. You must choose. Me, as you promised last night—or Lady Jessica."

Only for a moment of misery did she hesitate. "I could never leave Aunt Jes-

sica," she whispered.

With a curious dignity Austin bowed. "Then I wish you good-bye. And, as I pack, I would be glad if you would arrange to have my things—searched. Good-bye."

NCE, only once, was our Mr. Ginger's name mentioned in the next three weeks. With a bang of the great front door he had dropped out of Venn's life, and the last she had seen of him—the last she would ever see of him—was as he ploughed down the broad gravelled curve of the drive, a suitcase in either hand, electing to walk four miles to the railway station and wait for a train.

"And are you still fond of cricketers?" Great-aunt Jessica demanded with stunning

abruptness one night.

In those three weeks Venn had scarcely spoken three words. Now she blazed. Many things there were she told Great-aunt Jessica, but sharpest of all, most regrettable of all, was a thing she did not in her heart believe herself. Great-aunt Jessica, she said, was frightened of living alone, and she had scared off the man who would have taken her away. The man who . . . the man who . . . and she burst into tears.

"But," argued Great-aunt Jessica at

"But," argued Great-aunt Jessica at length, "you let him go. He asked you to go with him. Had you really loved him, that things were wrong would never have

stopped you."

"You know I would never marry anyone without your approval," sobbed Venn. "You know I would never leave you. I love you too much. And, of course, Austin never stole your wristlet! You must have mislaid it. Nothing else was taken—""

"Nothing else," pointed out Great-aunt

Jessica, "was there to take."

"If—if only he hadn't been so—so definite." She was fixing her great-aunt defiantly now, anger in her eyes. "I would have followed him. Made him come back. And—and now I'm never going to talk of him—or think of him again!"

Great-aunt Jessica was growing peculiar. She was growing odd and senile in her ways. That age was at length weakening her mind had been obvious to Venn ever since that ill-starred afternoon when Austin had arrived at Faveringe Hall. Twice in mornings that followed Venn's maid retrieved a pair of rubber Wellingtons—Venn's Wellingtons from Great-aunt Jessica's room, and they were still wet with dew. Then once, in the night, Venn heard Great-aunt Jessica moving about in her dressing-room . . . watched her appear in the moonlight at the foot of her bed carrying those same Wellingtons ... watched her from the windows walking with her stick across the parklands. Hurriedly she dressed and followed her.

She had guessed that Great-aunt Jessica had been walking at night, but she had not suspected that the old lady was working on the age-old feud with the General, her neighbour. For so Venn surmised following her discovery that night. To the garden wall of the General's modest house she followed Great-aunt Jessica, watched her pick up a stone, watched her toss it stiffly at the house, then with dismay in her heart followed the old lady home, back through the shadows and the moonlight.

Great-aunt Jessica was bowing at length to Time. Odd and senile in her ways. Her mind was unhinged. And more than her mind, for next day Great-aunt Jessica for the first time within memory was confined to her bed with a chill. From the bed Great-aunt Jessica's eye followed Venn, about her anxious sick-room duties, with a hawk-like, defiant air. But Venn avoided that eye. She did not want Great-aunt Jessica to see that her lashes were wet. For even now, Great-aunt Jessica missed nothing.

But that day of Great-aunt Jessica's illness was a day of swift surprises for Venn. Blades, in the first instance, dropped a bombshell on precedent at Faveringe Hall.

"The General," he announced, scared, to

Venn, "has called."

"The—General?" Venn pushed at a stray lock on her forehead.

"He is under the impression, Miss Venetia, that—that he has been invited to luncheon."

"Wait a minute, Blades, while I think," begged Venn. In the state bedroom at her back Great-aunt Jessica was complaining at the warmth of her hot-water bottle. "I will be down in a moment to entertain him," she decided. "Give the General a—a cocktail, Blades, and tell him I'll be—be down in a moment."

First she adjusted the hot-water bottle, then she went into her bedroom adjoining to think. . . .

Someone on the terraces was calling her name. He kept on calling it. "Venn! Venn! "Venn!"

With a small pain pinned close under her heart she ran to the windows. "Austin!" she cried.

"At last!" he said, a trifle irritably it seemed. "I've been sneaking round all over the place. Why couldn't I have met you somewhere? Why did I have to see you before the old General pushed in?"

"The General?" offered Venn weakly.
"Well, I'm staying with him, aren't I?"
She shook her head. "I don't know."

"Look here," began Austin, growing slightly red in the face, "you said in your last note-" He produced it from a

pocket.

Like a lantern bobbing its way home in the dark, certainty was coming home to Venn. "Let me see that note," she said, with a queer little catch to her voice.

For a moment she thought, steadying herself against the casement. No need for her to examine the handwriting of that note pressed tight in her fingers. She knew.

"You had better come in by the front door," she began unsteadily in a voice she hardly recognised. "You had better stay to lunch with the General." She paused,



"" What do you mean,' she demanded, 'by writing those notes and throwing them over the wall?"

Balancing on the sill of a library window, he handed it up, and reaching down she took "And there were—two other notes?" she asked.

"Of course." He was plainly puzzled, but she did not help him. "Saying what?"

"Fixing up for me to see you without meeting your aunt."

waiting for the fluttering to fade. But it would not fade. "Oh, Austin!" she said. "It's all right . . . everything's all right. . . ."

She left him staring up bewildered at the

empty window.

In Great-aunt Jessica's bedroom she faced Great-aunt Jessica squarely in her bed.

"What do you mean," she demanded, "by writing those notes and throwing them over the wall?"

But Great-aunt Jessica had been expecting it. She smiled remotely. "I heard him," she said, "at your window. Mr. Test Match Ginger. So he came back!"

Venn accepted the evasion. "What did he say in the answers?" she asked, on a

different note.

"I read," said Great-aunt Jessica, "just as much as was necessary. There was a good deal more." From under her pillows she drew forth two crumpled envelopes. "Read them. Exchanged through the medium of whistling and throwing stones. Romantic."

" But how--- ? "

Great-aunt Jessica waved a protesting hand. "Don't be tiresome, child! I have enough to occupy me. Don't think I am unaware of the fact that that dunderheaded idiot of a General is downstairs. In my house! And to think that I had to invite him—the blackguard."

"But, why, Aunt Jessica?" It seemed a reasonable question to Venn.

"Tut, child! If he obliged me by inviting our Mr. Ginger to stay with him for the fishing, one must do something in return. If—what is it, Venn?"

Venn was staring at a spray of diamonds clamped round Great-aunt Jessica's wrist. "You—you found the wristlet?" she stammered.

Great-aunt Jessica shook her head. "I never lost it. Our Mr. Test Match Ginger's story of a man in the bushes gave me my chance. You have to make sure, Venn. You have to make sure. In trouble, rather than in happiness—— You're not going, child?"

Swinging round on her heel, Venn faced her. Her cheeks were scarlet, her fingers clenched.

"Oh, oh!" she managed. "I think

you're---'

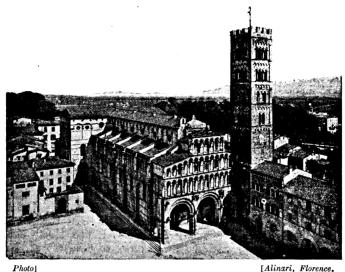
Great-aunt Jessica put her hands over her ears. "I beg of you," she cried. "Not a jelly-bellied pelican, please!"

HOROLOGE.

QUAINT figures serve me for a morning clock
More punctual than the sun that moves in heaven...
A hand that gives a timorous sort of knock
Which means, as though it said so, "Up! it's seven."
A milkman's clatter is a quarter-past:
And two (say) typists running up the street
The half: follows the break of fast,
And eight should be a postman that I meet.

An old maid sprucely taking shutters down:
A tyke made furious by my fleeting heels:
A wight who checks the tickets (half a clown):
And half-past eight (with luck) means moving wheels
Then every moment has its several face...
A gay old scamp is twenty-five to nine,
And folk we pick up at each stopping-place
Pulse out last hour of freedom in decline.

And though no gong should strike it, I know well A flower-girl fat and fine just round the Strand Is three small wretched moments from my knell For all the autumn flowers in her hand. A leap, a bursting lung, dropped hat and stick, And hanky to my forehead means "the tick!"



THE CATHEDRAL, LUCCA.

[Alinari, Florence.

HOLY FACE

By ALDOUS HUXLEY

OOD TIMES are chronic nowadays. There is dancing every afternoon, a continuous performance at all the picture palaces, a radio concert on tap, like gas or water, at almost any hour of the day or night. The fine point of seldom pleasure is duly blunted. Feasts must be solemn and rare, or else they cease to be feasts. "Like stones of worth they thinly placed are" (or at any rate they were in Shakespeare's day, which was the day of Merry England), "or captain jewels in the carcanet." The ghosts of these grand occasional jollifications still haunt our modern year. But the stones of worth are indistinguishable from the loud imitation jewellery which now adorns the entire circlet of days. Gems, when they are too large and too numerous, lose all their precious significance; the treasure of an Indian prince is as unimpressive as Aladdin's cave at the pantomime. Set in the midst of the stage diamonds and rubies of modern pleasure, the old feasts are hardly visible. It is only

among more or less completely rustic populations, lacking the means and the opportunity to indulge in the modern chronic Good Time, that the surviving feasts preserve something of their ancient glory. Me, personally, the unflagging pleasures of contemporary cities leave most lugubriously unamused. The prevailing boredom—for oh, how desperately bored, in spite of their grim determination to have a Good Time, the majority of pleasure-seekers really are! —the hopeless weariness infect me. Among the lights, the alcohol, the hideous jazz noises and the incessant movement, I feel myself sinking into deeper and ever deeper despondency. By comparison with a nightclub churches are positively gay. If ever I want to make merry in public, I go where merry-making is occasional and the merriment therefore of genuine quality; I go where feasts come rarely.

For one who would frequent only the occasional festivities the great difficulty is to be in the right place at the right time. I have travelled through Belgium and found, in little market towns, kermesses that were orgiastic like the merry-making in a Breughel picture. But how to remember the date? And how, remembering it, to be in Flanders again at the appointed time? The problem is almost insoluble. And then there is Frogmore. The nineteenth-century sculpture in the royal mausoleum is reputed to be the most amazing of its amazing kind. I should like to see Frogmore. But the anniversary of Queen Victoria's death is the only day in the year when the temple is open to the public. The old Queen died. I believe, in January. But what was the precise date? And, if one enjoys the blessed liberty to be elsewhere, how shall one reconcile oneself to being in England at such a season? Frogmore, it seems, will have to remain unvisited. And there are many other places, many other dates and days which, alas, I shall always miss. I must even be resignedly content with the few festivities whose times I can remember and whose scene coincides, more or less, with that of my existence in each particular portion of the year.

One of these rare and solemn dates which I happen never to forget is September the thirteenth. It is the feast of the Holy Face of Lucca. And since Lucca is within thirty miles of the seaside place where I spend the summer, and since the middle of September is still serenely and transparently summer by the shores of the Mediterranean, the feast of the Holy Face is counted among the captain jewels of my year. At the religious function and the ensuing fair I am, each September, a regular attendant.

"By the Holy Face of Lucca!" It was William the Conqueror's favourite oath. And if I were in the habit of cursing and swearing, I think it would also be mine. For it is a fine oath, admirable both in form and substance. "By the Holy Face of Lucca!" In whatever language you pronounce them, the words reverberate, they rumble with the rumbling of genuine poetry. And for anyone who has ever seen the Holy Face, how pregnant they are with power and magical compulsion! For the Face, the Holy Face of Lucca, is certainly the strangest, the most impressive thing of its kind that I have ever seen.

Imagine a huge wooden Christ, larger than life, not naked, as in later representations of the crucifixion, but dressed in a long tunic, formally fluted with stiff Byzantine folds. The face is not the face of a

dead, or dying, or even suffering man. is the face of a man still violently alive, and the expression of its strong features is stern, is fierce, is even rather sinister. From the dark sockets of polished cedarwood, two yellowish tawny eyes, made apparently of some precious stone, or perhaps of glass, stare out, slightly squinting, with an unsleeping balefulness. Such is the Holv Face. Tradition affirms it to be a true, contemporary portrait. History establishes the fact that it has been in Lucca for the best part of twelve hundred years. It is said that a rudderless and crewless ship miraculously brought it from Palestine to the beaches of Luni. The inhabitants of Sarzana claimed the sacred flotsam; but the Holy Face did not wish to go to Sarzana. The oxen harnessed to the waggon in which it had been placed were divinely inspired to take the road to Lucca. And at Lucca the Face has remained ever since. working miracles, drawing crowds of pilgrims, protecting and at intervals failing to protect the city of its adoption from harm. Twice a year, at Easter-time and on the thirteenth of September, the doors of its little domed tabernacle in the cathedral are thrown open, the candles are lighted and the dark and formidable image, dressed up for the occasion in a jewelled overall and with a glittering crown on its head, stares down-with who knows what mysterious menace in its bright squinting eves? -on the throng of its worshippers.

The official act of worship is a most handsome function. A little after sunset a procession of clergy forms up in the church of San Frediano. In the ancient darkness of the basilica a few candles light up the liturgical ballet. The stiff embroidered vestments, worn by generations of priests and from which the heads and hands of the present occupants emerge with an air of almost total irrelevance (for it is the sacramental carapace that matters; the little man who momentarily fills it is without significance) move hieratically hither and thither through the rich light and the velvet shadows. Under his baldaquin the jewelled old archbishop is a museum speci-There is a forest of silvery mitres, spear-shaped against the darkness (bishops seem to be plentiful in Lucca). The choirboys wear lace and scarlet. There is a guard of halberdiers in a gaudily pied mediæval uniform. The ritual charade is solemnly danced through. The procession emerges from the dark church into the twilight of the streets. The municipal band strikes up loud inappropriate music. We hurry off to the cathedral by a short cut to take our places for the function.

The Holy Face has always had a partiality for music. Yearly, through all these hundreds of years, it has been sung to and played at, it has been treated to symphonics, of the Face. Times have changed, and the image must now be content with local talent and a lower standard of musical excellence. True, the goodwill is always there; the Lucchesi continue to do their musical best; but their best is generally no more nor less than just dully creditable. Not always, however. I shall never forget



THE HOLY FACE OF LUCCA.

cantatas, solos on every instrument. During the eighteenth century the most celebrated castrati came from the ends of Italy to warble to it; the most eminent professors of the violin, the flute, the oboe, the trombone, scraped and blew before its shrine. Paganini himself, when he was living at Lucca in the court of Elisa Bonaparte, performed at the annual concerts in honour

what happened during my first visit to the Face. The musical programme that year was ambitious. There was to be a rendering by choir and orchestra of one of those vast oratorios which the clerical musician, Dom Perosi, composes in a strange and rather frightful mixture of the musical idioms of Palestrina, Wagner and Verdi. The orchestra was enormous; the choir was numbered

by the hundred; we waited in pleased anticipation for the music to begin. when it did begin, what an astounding pandemonium! Everybody played sang like mad, but without apparently any reference to the playing and singing of anybody else. Of all the musical performances I have ever listened to it was the most Manchester-liberal, the most Victoriandemocratic. The conductor stood in the midst of them waving his arms; but he was only a constitutional monarch—for show, not use. The performers had revolted against his despotism. Nor had they permitted themselves to be regimented into Prussian uniformity by any soul-destroying excess of rehearsal. Godwin's prophetic vision of a perfectly individualistic concert was here actually realised. The noise was hair-raising. But the performers were making it with so much gusto that, in the end. I was infected by their high spirits and enjoyed the hullabaloo almost as much as they did. That concert was symptomatic of the general anarchy of post-war Italy. Those times are now past. The Fascists have come, bringing order and discipline -even to the arts. When the Lucchesi play and sing to their Holy Face, they do it now with decorum, in a thoroughly professional and well-drilled manner. It is admirable, but dull. There are times, I must confess, when I regret the loud delirious blaring and bawling of the days of anarchy.

Almost more interesting than the official acts of worship are the unofficial, the private and individual acts. I have spent hours in the cathedral watching the crowd before the shrine. The great church is full from morning till night. Men and women, young and old, they come in their thousands, from the town, from all the country round. to gaze on the authentic image of God. And the image is dark, threatening and In the eyes of the worshippers I often detected a certain meditative disquiet. Not unnaturally. For if the face of Providence should really and in truth be like the Holy Face, why then—then life is certainly no joke. Anxious to propitiate this rather appalling image of Destiny, the worshippers come pressing up to the shrine to deposit a little offering of silver or nickel and to kiss the reliquary proffered to every alms-giver by the attendant priest. For two francs fifty perhaps Fate will be kind. But the Holy Face continues, unmoved, to squint inscrutable menace. Fixed by that sinister regard and with the smell of incense

in his nostrils, the darkness of the church around and above him, the most ordinary man begins to feel himself obscurely a Pascal. Metaphysical gulfs open before him. The mysteries of human destiny, of the future, of the purpose of life oppress and terrify his soul. The church is dark; but in the midst of the darkness is a little island of candlelight. Oh, comfort! But from the heart of the comforting light, incongruously jewelled, the dark face stares with squinting eyes, appalling, balefully mysterious.

But luckily, for those of us who are not Pascal, there is always a remedy. We can always turn our back on the Face, we can always leave the hollow darkness of the Outside the sunlight pours down out of a flawless sky. The streets are full of people in their holiday best. At one of the gates of the city, in an open space beyond the walls, the merry-go-rounds are turning. the steam-organs are playing the tunes that were popular four years ago on the other side of the Atlantic, the fat woman's garments hang unmoving, like a huge forked pennon, in the windless air outside her booth. There is a crowd, a smell, an unceasing noise-music and shouting, roaring of circus lions, giggling of tickled girls. squealing from the switchback of deliciously frightened girls, laughing and whistling. tooting of cardboard trumpets, cracking of guns in the rifle range, breaking of crockery, howling of babies, all blended together to form the huge and formless sound of human happiness. Pascal was wise, but wise too consciously, with too consistent a spirituality. For him the Holy Face was always present. haunting him with its dark menace, with the mystery of its baleful eyes. And if ever, in a moment of distraction, he forgot the metaphysical horror of the world and those abysses at his feet, it was with a pang of remorse that he came again to himself, to the self of spiritual consciousness. thought it right to be haunted, he refused to enjoy the pleasures of the created world, he liked walking among the gulfs. In his excess of conscious wisdom he was mad; for he sacrificed life to principles, to metaphysical abstractions, to the overmuch spirituality which is the negation of existence. He preferred death to life. Incomparably grosser and stupider than Pascal. almost immeasurably his inferiors, the men and women who move with shouting and laughter through the dusty heat of the fair, are yet more wise than the philosopher.

They are wise with the unconscious wisdom of the species, with the dumb, instinctive, physical wisdom of life itself. For it is life itself that, in the interests of living, commands them to be inconsistent. It is life itself that, having made them obscurely aware of Pascal's gulfs and horrors, bids them turn away from the baleful eyes of

the Holy Face, bids them walk out of the dark, hushed, incense-smelling church into the sunlight, into the dust and whirling motion, the sweaty smell and the vast chaotic noise of the fair. It is life itself; and I for one have more confidence in the rightness of life than in that of any individual man, even if the man be Pascal.

REFLECTIONS.

THE dusk fell softly over all
And put the short-lived day to flight,
It freed the shadows, big and small,
Which had been captured by the light,
And in the river where, discreet,
On sturdy legs the old bridge wades,
It built a shadow bridge, complete
With parapets and balustrades.

Each arch made, where its shadow fell,

A circle with its counterpart,

So perfect, it was hard to tell

Where real should end and shadow start.

The lights gleamed on the bridge below

When lamps on that above were lit,

And, on the shadow bridge, would show

Two lines of traffic crossing it.

So to the bridge across life's stream
The dusk creeps oft and stealthily
To build its shadow bridge where beam
The lights that lack reality,
And many wayfarers who pass
Along that road to reach the town,
Forsake the real bridge for, alas,
The one of shadow, upside down.

ZOO FATHERS

By E. G. BOULENGER

(Director of the Zoological Society's Aquarium)

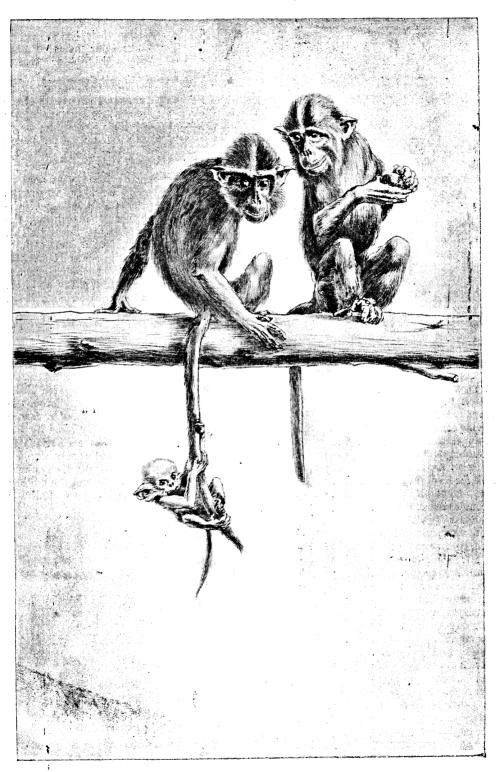
ILLUSTRATED BY L. R. BRIGHTWELL

THE state or condition of fatherhood is, we are assured by no less an authority than Mr. H. G. Wells in his Love and Mr. Lewisham, the greatest career in the Mr. Wells is possibly right, but the greatness of the career depends upon the Merely to play a part in the propagation of a species does not entitle an individual to the name of father in the best sense The average human father of of the term. to-day gives his offspring a better chance than he had himself. He is often joyfully inflated with quite mediocre results, and does his best to be a stolidly respectable blend of nurse and schoolmaster in the intervals of making a living. He is often not ashamed to wheel a pram round the park, to rock the cradle, or even to wash the family. In the enjoyment—or otherwise—of these virtues he may think himself unique, but a walk round the Zoo may convince him that he is not by any means alone. In Regent's Park the perfect—and imperfect—father is seen on every side. The father who kills himself in attempting work that should be done by his wife; the father who alternately makes and mars the home circle; and the father who makes himself scarce as soon as his progeny appears.

Reviewing Zoo fathers from the top downwards, it is somewhat disappointing to find that the average mammal sets a very poor example. The monkey father, as a rule, finds his family a thorough nuisance, and detests the rising generation swarming up his tail, pushing its little fingers into his eyes, or swinging from his ears. So great is often his resentment that the Zoo authorities find it advisable to effect a temporary divorce as soon as the family arrives. The marmoset, a tiny monkey-like creature from Tropical America, is an exception, for the father takes sole charge of the baby, handing it over to the mother only at feeding times. In its quite early days, as soon as the meal is over the mother returns the infant to her husband, who nurses it in his flank. The baby as it grows older holds on higher and higher up until eventually it takes up a position across the paternal shoulders. When his offspring is two months old, the father tires of his nursing duties and gently but firmly pushes it away, refusing to relieve the mother.

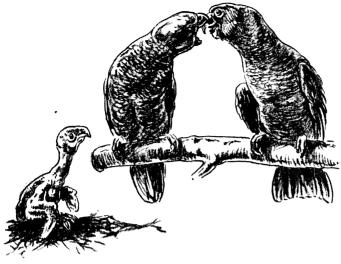
Male elephants, deer, cattle and antelopes that live in herds for mutual protection are usually in close proximity to their young, but the mother alone takes an active interest in their welfare. In some mammals the fatherly instinct may undergo such a reaction that it can only find an expression in murder, and for this reason many mammalian mothers hide themselves in a nunlike seclusion until the youngsters can fend for themselves. Were it otherwise the father would demolish the family. The Zoo polar bear has been known to devour his offspring as soon as they were born. It is charitable to suppose that his reason in so doing was to hide them from possible intruders, but it is more likely that his conduct was due simply to greed and temper. In the wild the mother polar bear journeys into the snowfields until she feels secure from all and sundry-especially her loving spouse. There she digs for herself a "fug hole," 10 to 20 feet deep, where her babies are brought into the world and nursed until they can shuffle in her footsteps.

Fatherhood possibly appears in its most picturesque form in the Zoo aviaries. The feathered father is always perfectly "turned out," and frequently takes upon himself the major portion of the nursing duties. The cock hornbill incarcerates his mate in a hollow tree, and plasters up the entrance hole when she is safely ensconced. He then devotes himself to supplying her with suitable food until she has got the eggs off her mind, and the ensuing family decently fledged and able to pick up a living for itself.



THE RISING GENERATION.

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FATHER PARROT FEEDS MOTHER-

The average bird father takes a fair share of the nest-building. The male brush turkeys of the Far East live a communal life and combine to form enormous hillocks 15 feet in diameter and 7 feet high, which serve for the incubation of the eggs of several females. The same site is used year after year, further material being added to compensate for the ravages of wind and rain. The fathers, having completed their building jobs, quietly disappear for a merry time in the woods.

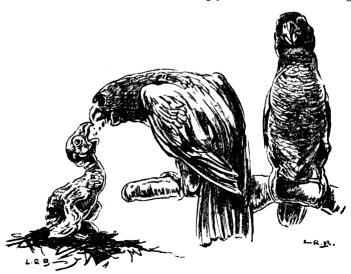
Amongst mammals the lion takes pride of place as an indefatigable hunter who will trek for days on end in order to support his wife and family; but he is a notable and

picturesque exception. Amongst birds it is quite the rule for the male to take more than a fair share of family's upkeep. tomtit has been observed to make 200 journeys in a sixteenhour day, each journey necessitating a flight of many hundred yards. Certain young birds are quite unable to digest raw food. They must be given matter that has been subjected to the peptonising fluids of the parental interior, and cock cormorants, and flaminpelicans goes allow the fledglings to all but crawl down their gullets and so take their meals of halfdigested fish or crustaceans.

Notwithstanding the universal popularity of the parrot, very little is known of its private life, as it can seldom be persuaded breed in captivity. Not long ago, however, a pair at the Zoo brought up a family. Both parents on $_{
m the}$ \mathbf{sat} eggs, the father sitting during the day, the mother by night, and they successfully reared a son and heir. The ridiculous-looking youngster, quite naked at birth. with an enormous beak.

was fed on regurgitated food. The cock bird deposited his half-digested meal into the beak of his consort, who swallowed it, and after a short interval handed it over to the baby.

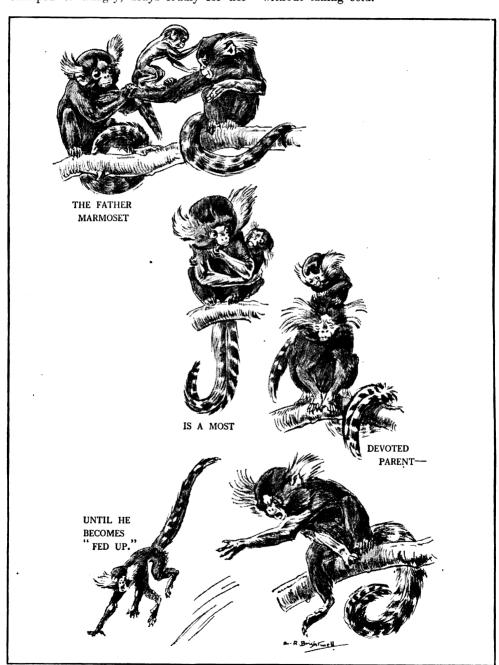
Even incubation is generally a matter of co-partnership, except amongst game birds, when the heavy work is invariably left to the female. A delightful instance of a father helping to rock the cradle is offered by the penguin, a bird that makes an irresistible appeal owing to its grotesquely human appearance. The single egg is always held between the parental instep, and the mother—or father—simply let the lower half sag



WHO HANDS IT TO BABY.

so that the egg is completely protected from the Antarctic cold. Both parents share the nursing duties. Mother, when feeling cramped or hungry, brays loudly for her

young penguin appears he is still nursed—egg-fashion—by his devoted parents until he is fat and strong enough to rest on the ice-floes without taking cold.



husband, who obediently hurries to the scene, and with the dexterity of a juggler catches the egg on his instep as his wife twitches it over from hers. When the There is very little parental romance in the reptile world, and the writer is unable to recall a single instance in which a male reptile lives up to the modern understanding of the term "father." The mother, however, sometimes shows great solicitude for her offspring. In certain snakes, for instance, she coils round the eggs, subjecting them to a

PAPA PIPEFISH AND FAMILY.

form of incubation until they are hatched.

The amphibians—the frogs, toads and salamanders—form a half-way house between the reptiles and fishes and provide

numerous instances of genuine paternal affection. The Alytes Toad carries the eggs, laid in a rosary-like string, about on his own person, tied around his hind limbs. Thus

heavily burdened, he spends the day in the safety of a subterranean retreat, stealing forth at night to bathe the eggs in the nearest pond, where he takes a hip bath. At the end of three weeks the youngsters emerge in the form of tadpoles, escape into the water, and grow up like ordinary frogs and toads.

Still more remarkable is the case of the little Darwin's Frog from Chili, which has a relatively large pouch under the throat and communicating with the mouth. During the mating season this pouch acts as a species of bellows or bagpipes, enabling the lovesick frog to warble sweet nothings to his lady; but when the eggs are laid, he drops romantic chirpings for more practical affairs. inflatable sac that once enabled him to voice his love now becomes a cradle, and he swallows the eggs. The eggs hatch into tadpoles, which grow apace, and to accommodate these the pouch becomes so extended that almost covers the creature's under-surface, resembling an immensely inflated waistcoat. Here live the tadpoles until they emerge as perfect little frogs.

The male giant Japanese Salamander, a creature possibly lower in the mental make-up than any frog, carefully guards a mass of 500 eggs, walking over and through them to ensure aeration.

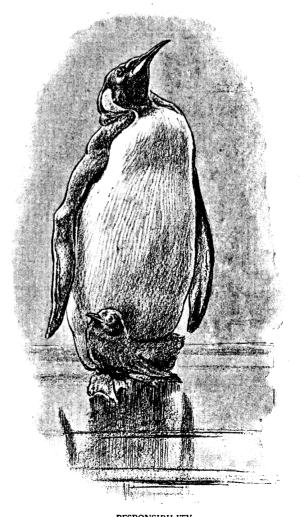
In most fish the father, having once assured the continuance of the race, goes his way and leaves the rest to chance—in other words, the laws of Nature. As a rule, a fish takes no personal interest in his family and does not attempt to exercise any form of control. There are, however, a number of delightful exceptions, finny fathers who not only

build the home, but undertake its entire management. The common stickleback is a classic example. Like the sparrow, it rises to every occasion, and makes a brave show

against the heaviest odds. The male stickleback, having made up his mind to marry, sets about the building of a home. This he accomplishes by gathering scraps of wood and twig, biting them into suitable lengths and welding them into a globular structure on the stream or pond bed. He binds the whole together with a sticky secretion and rams the stouter beams into position with his snout, using it as a pile-driver. The home once built, he decides on courtship, fighting many a gory battle prior to winning his bride. The lady of his choice is led (if refractory dragged) into the birdlike nest, over which he mounts guard whilst the eggs are being laid. A polygamist by nature, he encumbers himself with anything from four

to eight brides, and having tasted sufficiently of the joys of matrimony, expels them from the home and settles down to work. The eggs are not only to be guarded from such foes as scorpions, beetles and newts, but also from the mother sticklebacks. The nest having two entrances - which also act as exits-father is hard pressed to guard both doorways. When the eggs are hatched the householder watches every movement of the fry that hover over and around him like a small subaqueous cloud. There comes a day when the young are large enough to fend for themselves. Slowly the father loses interest in them, and they in him, and, his life work being accomplished, he dies. We have cited the case of the stickleback at some length, since he is a native fish that may be said to swim at one's doorstep and can be kept in a tank in a living-room with the minimum of trouble. Indeed, he will love, fight, build his home and guard his family within the confines of a biscuit But there are other fish that display just as much family instinct, and, adapting themselves to the dictates of environment, produce nests quite as wonderful as the stickleback castles in the village pond. The bowfin of North America, for instance, clears an area several square yards in extent in the thickest part of a reed bed. Here he induces his bride to lay the eggs, which he guards until hatched. Again, many male tropical fresh-water fish, notably the paradise fish of China, build fairylike rafts of sticky rainbow-hued bubbles in the midst of which the eggs are laid. The father blows a slimy secretion on the surface of the water, expelled from his mouth until it froths up into a glistening mass. The eggs having been laid, he likewise protects them from his cannibalistic wife.

A fish father of the first grade may often be seen in the Zoo Aquarium in the person of the blue cichlid perch of Central America. This male parent not only works at all hours to help his mate hollow out a basin-shaped



RESPONSIBILITY.
The father King Penguin—and the Crown Prince,

nest in the sand covering the tank floor, but having seen the eggs well and truly laid, watches over them with a care that is pathetic in its complete abnegation of personal comforts. When the newly hatched young stray from the nest, father cichlid surrounds the truants, inhales them into his capacious mouth, swims back to the nest with his burden, and expels his offspring with affectionate violence back into the nursery from which they strayed. There are fish that will not run the risk of allowing their young to hatch in any cradle less handy than their own mouths. One such is a catfish inhabiting South America, in which the male actually carries the eggs, about twenty in number, each the size of a pea, in his mouth, where they roll about until hatched. Finally, the pipefish of our shores may be quoted as an admirable example of what a father may rise to when he tries. Father pipefish takes over the family, carrying the eggs about in a kangaroo-like pouch formed by two flaps of skin on his under-surface. On hatching, the infant pipefish follow their father in a little shoal, and when tired twist their tails round any portion of his anatomy that may offer comfortable anchorage. The male sea-horse—merely a compressed form of a pipefish—undertakes the care of the children in a similar fashion.

Spider fathers are perhaps the most unfortunate of all fathers, being devoured by their wives immediately after the marriage ceremony.

Fatherhood and all it implies is a sufficiently vexed question as regards our own species, but with us it is at least standardised. Fatherhood in the Zoo animal world, however, would appear to be a jumble of contradictions. Why should a mere fish work itself to a faded ruin in looking after its young whilst a polar bear or dog, with a brain approaching nearer to that of Man, forsakes his wife and calmly strolls off the moment the family arrives? Nature—as represented by the Zoo—puts these and a hundred other questions to us every day, questions that are none the less fascinating because we have not yet found the answer.

DEPENDENCY.

THE little life I call my own
Another bore in pain for me,
Its load unbearable alone
A million hands sustain for me.

I get the food for flesh and mind
Which they have wrought and writ for me,
And through my devious ways I wind
By light that others lit for me.

Earth's secret beauties I unlock
With borrowed keys made bright for me,
I drink the waters from the rock
Which other sinews smite for me.

Mine is the peace born of their strife
Who in old graves are laid for me.
I hold the signed receipt for life
Which other souls have paid for me.

O hearts and minds and toiling hands!
O mighty courses run for me!
How pitiful in contrast stands
My use of all you've won for me!
HASSALL PITMAN.

THE GIRL OF THE LITTLE RED HAT

By ANDRUE BERDING

ILLUSTRATED BY LINDSAY CABLE

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→OR three evenings Mark Holborn, driver of Underground train No. 24 on the Tube line from the City to Hammersmith, saw nothing of the girl but her hat as he pulled his train into Temple station with what he considered a graceful The hat was a brilliant red, with a touch of black feather, a helmet-like, closefitting hat, possessing perhaps a world of character, depending upon whom it crowned. What was underneath the helmet Mark tried to guess but failed. Once he fancied he caught a glimpse of a wisp of brown hair, but he was far from sure. He stood on tiptoe in his power cab, craned his neck and peered, but he might just as well have saved himself the trouble. A sea of brown and black shoulders intervened. He took to cursing the jostling, cloth-covered shoulderblades that rose and fell but never fell enough to tell him what was beneath the little red hat.

That she was of medium height he estimated, and that she was pretty he guessed, for the line of men crushing to the door opened to let her through. Such was a privilege not granted the unpretty. That she was vivacious he supposed by the way her hat bobbed as she walked.

Single at 29, earning £5 15s. a week, owning a tiny home at Clapham, Mark sighed. There should be something more to life than driving a train through roaring blackness.

Then, on the fourth night, he saw a little more of her. When he braked the train to a stop twenty feet from the headway clock, he scanned the waiting crowd for the red hat in vain. He was greatly disappointed that it was not there. He feared it might have changed to another hat before he had seen its owner. Could he

have recognised the girl from what he had seen of the hat? Foolishly and buoyantly he told himself he could. He could recognise the exact height, the charming way of wearing the hat, the vivacious way it bobbed along—anywhere!

Suddenly he exclaimed aloud. There she was, running across the station. The crowd of men opened to let her through.

"Ye gods!" exclaimed Mark.

He had seen but her head and shoulders in one brief moment—and of course the hat—but she was a darling. Dark hair of some sort, blue eyes which the light of the station made bluer still, pretty lips open as she ran. Athletic, too, she was—ran with a smile and an easy jaunt. She wore a charming, loose-flowing coat that added grace to her running by floating about her. No wonder the group of men opened an avenue for her. She was a princess. Mark felt warm all over. He adored her. She was every whit what the chic red hat had promised she would be.

Mark cursed that group of men for being able to get so close as to see the glory in her eyes, the life on her lips, and he cursed again as he saw in his mind's eye the hands that perhaps would touch her under pretence of pushing her into the train. If he ever saw anyone do that he vowed he'd get out of his cab and kill him on the spot. It would mean the loss of the £5 15s. a week, and perhaps of the little home at Clapham, but it would show her that he loved her.

When the starter signal sounded he notched up ever so smoothly lest it should jolt Her. Through the wailing and swishing of the wind and the screaming of the rails as he dashed pell-mell through the tunnels his heart sang to him a love song of the girl under the little red hat. The

shriek of the steel flanges, often so maddening, gave background to the wild and glorious orgy of his song. He loved her and he was singing to her. Perhaps she heard him in her heart. Let the world laugh and call him crazy. It was a heavenly insanity.

Ordinarily he hated the red lights of the

until he reached Baron's Court that he saw the red hat bobbing among the departing passengers. His eyes, nose and mouth were glued to the window as the hat slowly disappeared towards the exit. Why under heaven did that barrel-bellied old duffer, with an overcoat like a tent, insist on getting in the way? Mark cursed him with

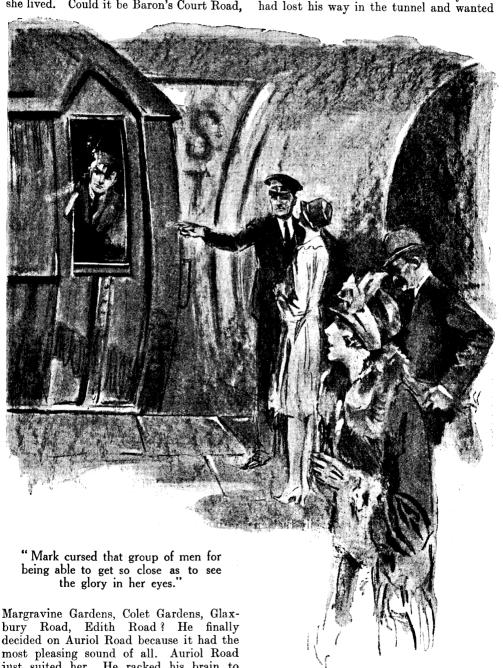


danger signals and the repeaters, for they made him slow down, if not come to a total stop, but to-night he loved them, for they were exactly the colour of the Hat.

He watched for her at all the stations into which he drew so carefully lest there should be a jar and it should jostle her as she stood ready to emerge. It was not language learned in the trenches at the early age of eighteen. All he saw was the red hat and a bit of fur collar over those exquisite shoulders. Not one glimpse thus far of the ankle he knew would be slim and taut and the leg whose every curve would be an ecstasy.

When Mark drew into the Richmond

terminal and before he left for his Clapham home, kept by a maiden aunt of sixty-five, he looked up Baron's Court in the street directory. Somewhere in that cross-word puzzle of streets, gardens and cemeteries she lived. Could it be Baron's Court Road, How could the Princess of the Little Red Hat live in a two-storey dull brick house? And yet there were no palaces there. Mark studied the map so long that George Harvey, a rear-guard, asked him sarcastically if he had lost his way in the tunnel and wanted



decided on Auriol Road because it had the most pleasing sound of all. Auriol Road just suited her. He racked his brain to think what kind of neighbourhood it was. All he could remember were long rows of two- and three-storey dull brick houses.

to regain his bearings. Mark grunted a sour rejoinder and reluctantly departed for home.

Again and again and again Mark saw her. Always she was in Temple station when he drew in at 5.41½. Invariably she was enshrouded by the duller groups of brown, blue and black overcoats and dark felt and bowler hats. Only once did he catch sight of all of her-and then only for a fleeting second. She had indeed the slim little ankles he instinctively knew she'd have. She were a short skirt cut to the length and fashion prevalent. It revealed her legs beautifully—her beautiful legs beautifully. Mark was no connoisseur, but he had seen some of the most beautiful women in Paris during the War, and he believed he knew entrancing legs when he saw them.

Once he saw her, too, with a black hat instead of the red hat. For a moment it shocked him, as if she had committed a heinous crime by leaving the red hat at home. He had recognised her instantly, just as he thought he would, by the airy bobbing of the hat, though it was black instead of red, and he gave an unstifled shout of boyish joy as the crowd opened and his quick glance shot through the lane and made out that it was really she. admired her all the more because she had discarded the red hat, for it showed she could be pretty under any colour. Still, he was relieved when she appeared the next evening once again under her crown of red.

One evening his heart sank into his shoes and red-hot anger and jealousy flamed to his head. The Girl of the Little Red Hat was talking to a dapper young man when No. 24 pulled in. They stood a little apart from the crowd and Mark could easily make them out. The young fellow was courting her with every expression of his face, every flash of his eyes, every movement of his hands. She smiled and laughed until the crowd had pushed into the train and then made a run for it.

Mark started the train so jerkily that an inspector noted it in his report. He was insanely angry with the whole world. Even the radiance of her smile and the brilliance of her laugh could not assuage his resentment, for they were given birth for the entertainment of another. He would remember that dapper young fellow as long as he lived. Let them but meet some day or night on the street. . . .

Mark's own chance came the very next night. As he drew in, as usual at 5.41½, he saw an envelope fall from her hand when she ran towards him to board the train. He knocked frantically on the door of his

cab and prayed she'd hear. She did hear. She turned. She obeyed his gestures and, gracefully stooping, recovered the envelope. She looked back and flashed him a smile and a nod, and then disappeared in the crowd. Mark was too dazed to smile back. He was all aglow. Gods, how many times seven heavens there were in her eyes and the sweet gratitude of her smile! He cherished the glory of her smile in his heart, and it kept him from eating more than half of the dinner his aunt had kept waiting for him.

The more he saw of her now the more he wanted to talk to her. His whole body ached with the desire. He knew that behind her smile were stores of countless words, each one sweet and kind and beautiful. He'd give his week's salary, sorely as it was needed, for one of them. What one would he take? Ah, yes, his own name "Mark." It would be canonised if she said it. All the sublimity of the Evangelist whose name he had been given would descend upon it if she but uttered it. would be a different man with a different name. It would be the Mark of the Girl of the Little Red Hat and not the Mark of Aunt Edith or old Mrs. Claybrook, who had nursed him. All the mockery and derision with which his name had so often been sounded would be wiped away in the baptism of her voice.

He had begun to talk to her as he pulled into Temple each evening and saw her enter No. 24, and into Baron's Court and saw her leave. Solemnly and lovingly and tenderly he said "Hello" to her and told her over and over and over he loved her, even when he could see only her red hat and sometimes but part of that. Solemnly and lovingly and tenderly he said "Good night" to her and wished her beautiful dreams and begged that she might think of him a little—just a little, dearest sweetheart.

"I'd give everything I have for you, darling," he murmured. "My life, my aunt, even my little house at Clapham. If only I could die for you to show you how I love you!"

And he pictured a disaster and a panic in the Temple station and himself rushing out and protecting her heroically from the mad rush of the fear-infuriated mob.

Or perhaps the roof of Temple station was crashing in and he seized her by that slender waist, dragged her into his cab and sped out of danger. Always he was the hero, risking or laying down his life for her, and always she rewarded him with a kiss that concealed worlds of meaning, whether bestowed upon his living or upon his dead lips.

He had devoted his working time to her and he was now to devote his off time to her as well. Friday night was as a rule his free night. He usually spent it in taking Aunt Edith to a cinema. But this Friday evening at 5.30 saw him on Tube train No. 24, not in the power cab as usual, but riding as a passenger. He was afire with impatience. Would she be there at Temple at $5.41\frac{1}{2}$? Would she get on this first car, as was her custom? Would she recognise him as the driver who had pointed out her fallen letter to her? He cursed the jerky driving of Theodore Gray, the substitute driver. He felt the jars when Gray notched up too rapidly and when he miscalculated his train-load and put on the air too hard, almost spragging the wheels. He counted the stations breathlessly-Mark Lane, Monument, Cannon Street, Mansion House, Blackfriars; next would be Temple. Mark positively trembled. It would be different seeing her through the sooty windows of a power cab and then close at hand. Perhaps he wouldn't even love her, close like this. But he cursed himself for his disloyalty. How could he keep from loving her?

At Temple, with a frantic beating of heart, Mark waited. He had at first decided he would get off and then get back if she were there. But he felt rooted to the spot. Was she there after all? He swore softly at the passengers for being so long getting off. Ah, yes, she was there. She was stepping forward, a vision in a red hat. She was coming near him. She looked at him and passed on into the interior of the car, while Mark just stared.

Mark felt suddenly guilty, the feeling of a man who has put profane foot into a hallowed sanctuary. But he was no penitent. Instead, he wildly exulted that he had dared to do this thing.

She was forced to stand. Mark wanted to walk up and shake the serene male corpulence which occupied the seat before her. But he was cemented to his spot near the door.

She was doubly beautiful, standing there grasping the strap, a slim, elastic figure, with arm upraised, poised as if for a leap half-way across the world. Mark watched

how she balanced herself on her toes as the train swung round the corners. He adored her, from bright red hat to smart black shoes.

Driver Gray came to sharp stops at Charing Cross and Westminster, and Mark groaned. Would she think it was he who was causing the car to lurch and forcing her to snatch at her strap to keep from falling? He cursed Driver Gray with every opprobrious epithet he could find.

At Baron's Court he followed her out. She walked quickly and with marvellous grace to the street. Mark gasped. In the gas-illumined, hazy street she was like a fairy princess from a story-book. Her loose-flowing coat must surely be a cloak of gossamer. He half expected her to vanish from his sight. He was brought back to his senses by the hard, sure, unfairylike staccato of her leather heels on the pavement.

She crossed Baron's Court Road and walked down Saracen Road. Ah, no, Mark told himself sadly, she did not live in Auriol Road, for Auriol Road was on the other side of Baron's Court. Would there be any more disillusionments? No, no! he fiercely replied. She was perfect and there could be no disillusionments.

He longed for a runaway horse to come dashing along so that he could throw himself in its path and save her from injury. If only he could do something to make her realise he existed, if only as the most degraded and humble of her worshippers!

She turned at Comerach Street, with Mark at a discreet distance behind her. She had a beautiful walk, a free-swinging yet wholly feminine step. If she had slipped and fallen Mark would have said she had a graceful way of falling softly. Everything she did had in Mark's eyes a glamour that put it almost in another world.

She turned at Gledstanes Road and then at Castletown Road and made a last turn before No. 530. Mark crossed to the other side in time to see the door open and an arms-around-neck greeting of mother and daughter. What wouldn't he have given for one such embrace?

Mark lingered on the opposite side for two hours. Shortly after the Girl of the Little Red Hat had entered her home Mark saw a light in the front room on the first floor. Perhaps it was her room, the sanctum sanctorum. But he saw not even a shadow of her. And through the two hours he stood there he saw no sign of her. But



"She gazed at him a moment in amazement. . . . 'Who are you?' she asked incredulously."

he was glad she stayed at home and that the dapper young man did not call.

The house where she lived took on the semblance of a palace. As his eyes became dim with watching, he fancied the dusty old brick front had changed to white marble. The flickering gas-light playing along the picket fence conjured up for him a leaping fountain. The whole neighbourhood was a fairvland and she the beautiful Princess of it.

When Mark finally left he walked in a daze. He turned to the left instead of to the right into Gledstanes Road and wandered dreamily for half an hour before he made his way back to Baron's Court.

He did not see her again until Monday, and then he saw her every night until Friday. She wore the little red hat every time and so became yet more dear to him, if that were possible. His love began to be unbearable. He had to do something to tell her he loved her or go crazy. He thought of giving up his job, selling his house, and travelling to-well, France or anywhere. But that was the story-book method of seeking to forget. He really could not do

Friday evening he rode with her again to Baron's Court. They crossed Baron's Court Road, he fifteen feet behind her, and walked down Saracen Road.

Suddenly she turned and came swiftly back to him.

"Why are you following me?" she demanded angrily.

"I—I—I'm not," he stammered.

"You are," she retorted. "You followed me last week and stood for an hour and more across from my home. If you follow me any more I'll give you into custody."

She was about to turn. Yes, he had to say it, if he were hanged, drawn and quartered

for it.

"I love you," he said, and said it so vibrantly that she turned round.

She gazed at him a moment in amaze-

"Don't you dare!" she cried. "You're

despicable. I despise——"
"Please," he interrupted. "I won't bother you any more. But don't say words like that. They hurt. I've always heard you say sweet, kind things, though I've

never heard you speak before."-His pain "I've always was making him eloquent. just looked at you and adored you. But

"Who are you?" she asked incredulously. Then he told her. He told her of the Little Red Hat. The rush and bustle of stations. Her clothes. Her walk. Her eyes. His agony at the dapper young man. His song of love above the angry roar of the wheels. Words seemed to rush to his lips unbidden and pour forth in an eloquent torrent. He scarcely realised that they were walking along.

He told her of his conversations with her as he bent over the controller and the Dead Man's handle. How he said "Good night!" to her and wished her pleasant dreams. How she had dropped the envelope. Black hat instead of red hat. How she had smiled at him. How he had looked up the street map of Baron's Court. Why she ought to be living in Auriol Road instead of in Castletown Road. His name on her lips. "Mark," as she would say it.

The shriek of the train wheels, the wail of the tunnel winds, the little house at Clapham, Aunt Edith, all came to his lips and became part of the picture he was painting. She had head bent and said not a word, either of assent or of dissent. His story flowed on.

He told her how he had decided he could live no longer unless he told her of his love. France and the story-books. His Friday nights. The corpulent gentleman. Driver Gray. Down Gledstanes Road and turn at Castletown Road. No. 530. A fairy palace.

Ah, there it was again.

"Here's your home," he said lamely. "We've passed it seventeen times," she

He dared not look at her.

"I'm so very, very sorry," he said.
"Please don't be, Mark," she begged. She had somehow taken his hand. "Will you come to see me to-morrow night after your work-say, nine o'clock?"

He was dazed. She had called him Mark. He nodded agreement as if in a dream. And he knew that her voice held worlds more of kindness and sweetness and sympathy than he had ever imagined it would.

AND CHARLES—HIS • FRIEND •

By VAL GASCOIGNE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWÄR MILLS 🧉

ANDOLPH put the letter back in its blue, faintly scented envelope.
"Well, you'll have to write to her," he commanded lazily; being accustomed to order his life on the principle that one didn't keep dogs and do the barking oneself.

Lighting a carefully chosen cigar, he threw letter and responsibility alike to Standish, sitting opposite—awaiting both. Charles Standish, his cousin, who, ever since they were tiny boys together, had been loyal adherent, scapegoat, whipping-boy, secretary and general confessor—in short, all those qualities so neatly summed up on the old playbills as "and Charles—His Friend"—to careless, selfish, fascinating and altogether magnificent Randolph Owen.

He said, rather reluctantly: "It won't be quite the same thing, will it?" His whimsical, unhappy face, always a little shadowed with the things Randolph had left undone, was bent over the letter.

left undone, was bent over the letter.

"Not in the least," Randolph chuckled,
"but vastly more suitable. I ask you,
Charles, am I the right kind of person to
write weekly letters of counsel to a modern
child of eighteen, who has been misguidedly
placed under my guardianship?"

"No," said Charles, with the painful honesty that often embarrassed himself more than his listeners. "But you could

be if you liked."

Randolph shook his head. "Impossible, my dear chap. I can't once a week leave off being brilliant and subtle to switch myself into the right vein for guiding a callow fledgling—so much more in your line. Besides, Clotilde is far too engrossing at the moment."

"How long will that last?" Charles inquired, still fingering the letter. He wanted to get away by himself and read it.

He had once seen Felicity . . . and that was something a man didn't forget easily.

Randolph smiled. "Oh—till she's tired of me. In which case I make it my business to get tired exactly a week sooner. Easy—when you know the symptoms, though perhaps ungallant."

"I can't think what you get out of these affairs," Charles said soberly. "Haven't

you ever been in earnest?"

"Never—with women like Clotilde. They don't want you to be in earnest, beyond buying the sun, moon and stars for them and giving them a few thrills. But I didn't imagine you considered me a fit subject for the type of woman who wants a man to be 'in earnest'!" His black eyes mocked Charles through an ascending spiral of smoke rings.

"I don't-at present." Again Charles

was forced to honesty.

Randolph laughed; but there was a faint sting behind the laughter. He never liked criticism—hated it from Charles, at whom he openly mocked for his unworldliness, more than from anyone; though, strangely, he was the only one from whom he ever permitted it. "I really wonder you stay with such a degenerate," he scoffed.

"I sometimes wonder myself," Charles agreed politely, and got up to answer

Felicity Trevor's letter.

"Sign my name," said Randolph lazily from the depths of his chair, divining his secretary's probable errand with devilish accuracy.

"Do you," inquired Charles carefully from the doorway, "want to see the—er—

correspondence?"

"Good Lord, no! There'll never be anything in *your* letters to censor." Charles's annoyed colour as he closed the door was

not for outraged virtue, and Randolph

chuckled again.

"Funny," he mused, "how really good people hate to be thought it! I'll call old Charles a devil of a dog one of these days. and see him lick my hand for it."

For several weeks Charles Standish corresponded dutifully with Randolph's ward, at the moment completing her last term at a Paris finishing school, and already half in love in imagination with her young, devasrich, devastatingly attractive guardian. And it wasn't long before the young Felicity-almost as sophisticated as her guardian, for all her eighteen yearshad discovered the most amazing thing in the world to find in the possession of Randolph Owen, whose reputation had reached even her Paris school. She found a heart in those letters; an extraordinarily clean, good, unworldly heart, holding tenaciously to many qualities termed obsolete in her particular corner of the planet. And, queerly, it thrilled her with something her eighteen-years-old sophistication had told her she was altogether too worldly-wise, too blasé to feel. But in the beginning she gave nothing away. She did a good deal of delicate probing before there was the least hint that the first rather exciting, spurious attraction had grown to something deeper through those weekly letters—they were more than weekly now. And Charles Standish, like a good dancing partner, fitting his step to hers, found his letters growing less dutiful, less elder brotherly, less careful, and never realised till too late just where they were leading him.

To Charles, those letters were the most precious things he had ever possessed, even though he realised on the surface that they were written to Randolph; he was so used to deputising for his cousin in every conceivable phase of life that was likely to prove boring to that young exquisite that the knowledge was a little blunted. The letters had grown to three a week now, and it would have been difficult to hide them from Randolph; but he was in town for the season, leaving Charles, as usual, to run Tye Gate, the huge Border property, in his patient,

efficient way.

But Randolph gave up Cowes, astonishingly, to welcome his ward, and it set Charles wondering unhappily if he meant settling down at last; if he was beginning to realise tremendous responsibilities as sole guardian of the orphan Felicity and her comfortable five thousand a year, into full

possession of which she came, by a ridiculous will, on her nineteenth birthday. Charles scourged his tender conscience for the discontent with which he received the thought. Wasn't he always urging Randolph to settle down, to assume his responsibilities, tomarry? Very well then, what had he to grouse about?

But Randolph wasn't realising anything so dull. He was merely beating one of his masterly retreats from an untenable position. The engrossing Clotilde had wanted, after all. something more than "sun, moon and stars, and a few thrills." There had been scenes -no unusual event where Randolph was concerned; he was so maddeningly attractive. and, after the first, so maddeningly unattracted, that more than one woman had left him in hysterics. But Clotilde had materialised an enraged husband to force the reluctant hand, and Randolph hadn't considered it playing the game. He gave the lady to understand that he didn't consider her worth even a lawyer's fee for advice, and left her to pacify the once placidly sleeping dog she had so ill-advisedly aroused.

Free and mildly intrigued, he went North

to meet Felicity.

Randolph stood in the great hall of Tye Gate, framed in the massive stone doorway with a deerhound on either side and looking excessively feudal; six feet two, graceful as a panther, with the clean-cut features, the black hair and eyes of the nine-hundredyears-old Owens. . . . And in the background, his proper setting, stood Charles his friend, dreadfully uncertain whether the next hour wasn't going to smash the friendship of a lifetime. He couldn't sanely contemplate resigning the heavenly comradeship and understanding, the-something else unnameable, that had slipped through the sophistication of the young Felicity's letters —to Randolph.

The car drew up with a faint whine of brakes, and she stepped out-all in white, small and light and incredibly slender, the little white hat shading a face Charles Standish believed he knew by heart, but that, in this moment of realisation, set that heart beating wildly, and even sent Randolph Owen's cool, experienced blood racing a little.

A face pale as a magnolia bud, eyes like blue flames between thick, dusky lashes, mouth . . . Charles had kissed that mouth so often in his dreams he was almost ashamed to face it now, vivid, determined

and infinitely lovable. Randolph, deciding instantly that he would kiss it in the near future, had no shame at all. He went forward with renewed interest to greet his ward, a little less self-possessed than she wished to be, at the meeting.

She said, "Oh, it's good to be home at last, Randolph..." and gave him both her hands. Her upturned face was faintly flushed; there was the thing in her eyes that had crept into her letters; Randolph, in the flesh, was even more wonderful than

she had imagined.

But his greeting, quite adequate to the occasion but a trifle surprised—had she expected to be kissed, he wondered?—braced sophistication about her again. She passed on to meet the introduction to Charles—Charles, who had drawn back into the shadows with his foolish heart, resigning his dreams. Just because she was so wonderful it was not so utterly unbearable to think of her as Randolph's—the real Randolph, who only wanted finding, who could be rather splendid if he cared—he could resign her to that.

Felicity, possessing a keen sense of the dramatic and a little stung by Randoph's unresponsiveness, looked from one to the other and said instantly, "And Charles—his friend!" Because she had gained quite an honest picture of Charles from those letters.

"Exactly!" he said, bowing to the passing of his last hope that had never possessed much of a constitution anyhow. She had—in four brief words—restored him to the niche he had so arrogantly vacated. No need to brace himself to resignation. He

had nothing to resign.

Randolph was puzzled. There was something about the young Felicity he could not fathom. He could not understand the mingling of a sophistication that nearly matched his own with that queer tentative offering of herself, that faint questing like the dove seeking for her landing-place. The two didn't go, somehow. The sophisticated fruit usually looked before it dropped, and, watching her with eyes that were not nearly so cold and critical as he imagined, he decided that she was just a shade too ready. And he thought—" Is this Paris—or what the devil has old Charles been up to?"

They sat, after dinner, in the famous, old withdrawing-room of Tye Gate, untouched since the day when the Regent had set the seal of his approval upon it. Great-Aunt Victoria Owen, without equal as a chaperone

since she was nearly stone-deaf, sat with them; also Charles, torturing himself voluntarily. It would have been so much easier to go away, not to look at her. Columbine, he thought, staring fascinated at the pale gold head above the white petalled frock, and Randolph, with his sleek dark head and supple grace, was Harlequin—Harlequin the thief. And then again had the unhappy Charles to scourge himself for arrogance; for what right had he to play even Pagliacci to this Columbine?

He heard her say delicately, looking up at Randolph through bewildering lashes, "Isn't it ridiculous? I believe I have to

ask your consent before I marry."

Randolph said severely in his ridiculous rôle of guardian:

"You have to ask my consent for everything you do until you are nineteen, Felicity!"

"How absurd!" Her head tilted indignantly. "From all I hear, Randolph, you ought to have a guardian yourself."

"All I know is, anyhow, I'd rather have than be one!" Randolph misquoted impertinently. "As a matter of fact, I have"—he shot a sidelong glance at Charles—"a most efficient one."

Felicity said, reverting to her grievance, "I think the person chiefly concerned ought to have been consulted over the business first, anyway—why, I might have hated you!"

He said smoothly, making one of the earliest moves in the old game, "I'm so glad you don't." And seeing her deepened colour at war with the cool lift of her brows, he leaned forward and added softly, "Do you want to get married, Felicity?"

"I—think so."

He smiled. "A recent decision?"

"Not so very." Her blue eyes met his more inscrutably now.

"Shall I approve?" he questioned lightly, and she said slowly:

"I'm not certain—yet."

Randolph lit another cigarette; flickered his black eyes at her through the smoke. "Well, if you marry without my consent you forfeit your fortune, as they used to say, and certain charitable institutions will rejoice exceedingly. That may influence your decision a trifle."

"Would it influence yours?"

"If I were you? Oh, most certainly, my dear! Love in a cottage has never appealed. I lack the necessary simplicity of outlook in my make-up. There is such a

terrifying finality about love—and a cottage, and absolutely no discretion. Now, love in a flat "—his eyes mocked Charles's disapproval, glooming from his corner—"how temporary, how jerry-built! And how discreetly one can flit . . . I suppose it's the lift——"

Charles thought miserably, "Why does he play the fool like that? She's half in love with him already... through those damned letters..." because he had seen now just exactly what he had brought about

by his deputising.

But Felicity only leaned forward with a smile that made Charles, in the shadows, long for death, and said softly but decidedly, "Don't pose, Randolph. 'Lhatisn't you—that isn't an Owen of Tye Gate. It's a cheap hybrid by Bohemia out of Kensington . . . it doesn't go, here." She glanced round at the stately room; at the crouching hounds at Randolph's feet; at Great-Aunt Victoria, more royal than the Queen; then beyond to where the white peacock paced the terrace in the dusk. "It isn't worthy of the real you."

"Spare us, good child!" besought Randolph, unmoved. "Don't try to give me a halo, Felicity; it'll never fit. An opera hat, slightly on one side, a crumpled shirt-front, a dab of powder on one shoulder—that's me. This is not the something-or-other strain of Runnymede, as Tennyson said so forcibly; I put on feudalism with my tweeds for the benefit of the tenants. Better give old Charles your halo, he was shaped for it from

birth."

But she still smiled. "All the same, Randolph, you can never get away from the strain of Runnymede here, and in the end the real you will approve of the man I

shall choose—just because of that."

"Cryptic," he said with a shrug. "As a matter of fact, my dear, you're so absolutely devastating at the moment that I'm beginning to believe I could never consent to your marrying anyone but—myself." He looked at her with the eyes and smile that drove most women crazy because they never knew just how much it meant. No one ever knew quite what Randolph meant. Sometimes Charles wondered if he really knew himself . . . but this time they both knew

Great-Aunt, sitting beside Charles in the corner of the fireplace—the nights were almost always cold up at Tye Gate—was heard to say to her silent companion in a piercing whisper:

"Of course, that's what the girl's father always hoped they would do!" possessing that malicious characteristic of the deaf of invariably hearing the one thing she was not meant to hear. She hadn't heard any of Charles's politely bawled suggestions for her comfort, but had caught unerringly at the end of the painful catechism Randolph's irritated, "Why the devil won't she use an ear-trumpet?" and required considerable soothing down in consequence.

"Hilary Trevor was as good as a civil servant in providing for his relations at other people's expense," she added loudly.

Felicity, who protested no conventional affection for the parent for whom she had had no genuine one, gave an unfilial giggle, but Randolph said irritably, "Oh, for Heaven's sake go and sing something, Charles—that'll send her to bed." For Great-Aunt complained that Charles's singing made her think there was a bumble-bee in the room, and she got so tired dodging it.

So Charles, with his melancholy grey eyes and sensitive, mobile mouth perfectly attuned to the words, proceeded to make the prelude to "Pagliacci" a thing of unbearable loveliness; and Randolph settled down to business, having suddenly decided that he did not care how ready the young Felicity was, when she looked at him as she was looking now.

Charles watched them over the piano. Presently, transposing deftly as he went, he gave them "On with the Motley." He felt like it. Great-Aunt got up to go to bed in the middle; she found the bee abominable.

Charles left his refuge to take her up the polished stairs. Randolph opened the door with enraged courtesy. She sailed through it like a galleon in her wine-coloured shawl, swaying coquettishly towards Charles, the tips of her ivory wrinkled fingers lying on his arm. Twentieth-century lips brushed lightly the porcelain cheek that once had crimsoned virginally beneath the pure gaze of the Prince Consort at the Court of St. James.

Felicity said with the smile of a connoisseur over a perfect work of art, "What an exquisite Great-Aunt!" And Randolph said acidly, returning to his chair, "A great nuisance, you mean," for, like all egotists, he hated being put off his stroke.

They looked at each other in silence, and in the silence, while the dusk slipped closer and the peacock, a ghostly bird, paced before the window, something queer and electrical seemed to vibrate between them. Not surprising really. For hers was that

nameless quality that set Troy ablaze; a beauty of the spring, so that when you looked at her you saw a silver birch unfolding, caught the breath of bluebells and heard a thousand birds lifting their mating call. And no woman yet had ever looked at Randolph and denied him.

Felicity rose and faced him. Her breath came quickly as she met his eyes, but she kept him at bay, poised and elusive as any Columbine amid her white petals. She said very softly but deliberately, "Don't hide from me, Randolph . . . it's too late . . ." And leaning forward she kissed him lightly—only once, but on the mouth.

For the first time in his life Randolph, in a kind of dizzy trance, could not seize the psychological moment, and when he wrenched himself back to realities she was gone. There was only the scented dusk in the great room, and, beyond, still the peacock glimmering like a ghost. . . .

Randolph switched on the only light in the room that would leave his own face in shadow, Charles's in light. He said very quietly, "I want to see those letters," assuming, naturally and devilishly, that Charles had kept them, giving him no chance to lie.

But Charles, who had been expecting that question ever since Felicity had arrived, didn't attempt one. He didn't even say, "What letters?" to gain time. He only said as quietly as Randolph and quite as determinedly, though his hands were gripping the arms of his chair, "I'm sorry—I can't show them to you."

Randolph, more surprised than he allowed himself to show, said, still quietly, "They happen to be mine, Standish."

"In a sense, yes. But they weren't—exactly written to you—they were—answers——" Charles stopped abruptly. It simply wasn't possible to explain.

"You mean," said Randolph, beginning to be amused, "that you had rather strayed from your original rôle, don't you? And after I said your letters wouldn't want censoring! Well, I don't know that I blame you, but it's only fair to let me know where I stand. What I mean is, have you, or I, made our respective feelings clear to the lady? Have we—either of us—declared ourselves, in fact? I feel that's a point that should be cleared up."

Charles, getting up, said rather unsteadily, "I—I think you had better look out for someone else to do my job, Randolph. . . .

I'll leave everything as straight as possible."

"Don't be an ass!" Randolph said brutally. "And don't let's start melodrama to-night; I've been missing cues all the evening as it is. All I ask is to be put wise to the situation which, though entirely delightful, is slightly bewildering at the moment. You must admit that I'm not unreasonable."

After a pause Charles said in an entirely expressionless voice, "I beg your pardon, Randolph. It's been entirely my own fault. You have every right to see those letters." He went across to his desk—they were in the study now—and drew out a packet of letters written on thin foreign paper, faintly scented, stamped with a blue monogram. He handed them to Randolph with the look of a man going to the guillotine after the suffering of some last indignity. The bitterness of death had passed for Charles with the surrender of those letters.

Randolph read two of them, feeling at the same time angry and a little caddish. He handed the rest back and said, "I see." Then he lit a cigarette and said shortly, "The disillusion will be speedy."

"I don't see it."

"My dear chap, I can't possibly live up to those letters. Far too exhaustin'."

"You could, if you cared. Besides, you've—well, got to," Charles added between his teeth, "she's—more than half in love already."

"Agreed—but with what? Me, or this paper hero? Or a subtle mixture of both?" He eyed Charles's stubborn back oddly, waiting. Then he said, "Well, what are we going to do about it, old Cyrano, eh? Are you to prompt me to the end?"

He was faintly ashamed when he had spoken, but never in his life had he been supplanted with any woman, and the young Felicity had gone to his head as rare spring water enchants a man after a surfeit of wine. Besides, the Owens had never been able to let a beautiful thing go out of their hands from pagan days when they had sacked and plundered, to civilised times when they had toned that family trait down to the legitimate collection of articles of vertu.

Charles swung round suddenly. "No, I'm through," he said fiercely. "It's up to you now, either to make yourself what she believes you to be, and you can—if you care enough; or disillusion her. There's no middle course. The girl who wrote those

letters," his hands tightened involuntarily over the recovered packet, "will never love what you are now." And with those words

care for him exactly as he was, not a thing altered; just to show Charles—what? Perhaps that all women at heart love a rake;



"Charles swung round suddenly. 'No, I'm through,' he said fiercely. 'It's up to you now, either to make yourself what she believes you to be, or disillusion her.'"

Charles rammed the last nail into his own coffin, for he had put Randolph thoroughly on his metal at last; had roused a Randolph fully determined to make Felicity Trevor

perhaps that Felicity wasn't, after all, the girl Charles saw in those letters; he didn't know. He didn't care enough for his thoughts just then to probe very closely

into them, especially after he had seen the look in Charles's tired grey eyes. . . .

They rode round a good part of Tye Gate's thirty thousand acres the next morning; Randolph looking magnificently feudal on his snorting roan for the benefit of the tenants, Charles doing all the work and riding a slight grey mare with a wild and wistful eye rather like himself. And Felicity, swaying easily to the exquisite paces of the chestnut Charles had been schooling for weeks with his own perfect hands, thought, looking at the two men, "The King and his Jester," and her blue eyes, their flame a little subdued in cold morning light, took in considerably more than her escort realised.

She was puzzled; even more so than when she had first had those letters. There seemed to be three Randolphs and none of them tallied, but each of them attracted her strongly—in different ways. There was the rake, the writer of letters, and the careless cynical hybrid of modernity and feudalism who had been sobered into earnestness last night under her kiss. From the first and the last she wanted to take; to the second she wanted to give. She knew she wanted to take that writer of letters in her arms and comfort him, and yet that was the last thing one would ever want to do to Randolph.

Watching him, as he rode bareheaded and regal, in his face that serenity that only comes to those who neither "desire to please men nor fear to displease them," she thought, "He's maddeningly attractive. I think I'd hate it if he didn't care . . . I know I want him to kiss me "-she could always face her own emotions. Cantering at his side in a maze she wondered, "Those letters . . . were they just the proper thing to write in the circumstances? Just a pose? Or is he posing now—ashamed of being real?" And facing her own emotions frankly again, she thought, "Do I love him-or is it Tye Gate-the setting?" And she tried to put the magnificent Randolph stripped bare of possessions in two rooms in Peckham. Which was queer, because Randolph had ridden her round Tye Gate that morning in a scarcely admitted desire to put a hefty weight in the balance against those letters.

They motored that afternoon, on roads over which Agricola had marched his legions into Scotland, but they didn't talk about that. Charles could have told her all the old Border tales if he had been with them, but he had stayed at home. He'd had "things to see to," Randolph had told her, and then felt aggrieved that he'd felt it necessary to give an explanation. Hang it all, he paid Charles well enough for his job, and there had been "things to see to"; and anyway he didn't want always to be dogged.

So Charles spent the afternoon in the study doing accounts. He also read Felicity's letters again and wrote a short tragic poem rather "after Dowson" but a good way after. He appeared quite cheerful

when the other two came home.

The second evening started like the first. Charles sang and Great-Aunt went to bed. Then Charles played "Tristan," which fitted his mood at the moment but was unfortunate, because Felicity was a girl that no man could take safely to hear Wagner. She would become perilously yielding, entranced, would hold your hand, weep upon your shoulder, and not until far too late would the mere male understand that it had been Tristan's hand and Lohengrin's shoulder to the young Felicity, now once more bright and hard as a sword-blade.

But Randolph caught the psychological moment in perfect safety. He made love to her with such finished art that it had all the freshness of the first time; added to the fact that he was, for once, in earnest, it was fatal. They were out on the terrace in that clear Northern dusk that gives a mysterious vividness to the land before it slips into the dark; the white peacock passed and re-passed, bringing a sense of unreality. Felicity, robbed by the music of the faculty of facing her emotions, was now lost in them; she was in Randolph's arms with love and Tristan and the letters—a glorious muddle that was bound to end in tragedy for someone.

She sighed at last against his mouth, "I

loved your letters——"

He said with a little laugh, "I thought they were about the right line from the conventional guardian to the young person..."

"No, Randolph, they were—more than that. You know they were.... I loved

them," she said again.

"Is that all you love me for?" he asked lightly, so confident that he had won her without their help.

"No, not only that, but, why were you so different at first? I was dreadfully afraid of giving myself away . . . you were so odd, so casual——"

"We weren't alone," he pointed out, and

to stifle the faint sense of meanness that kept Essailing him, he whipped up a spark of anger against Charles. He ought to have been told of those letters before Felicity's arrival. "Besides," he added, "it's always far easier to write—things."

"For you? I should have thought-"

"Don't, it's such a waste of time, Felicity. ... " He drew her to him again.

Through his kisses the sound of Charles's singing drifted out to them. . . .

"Now folds the lily all her sweetness up And slips into the bosom of the lake. So fold thyself, my dearest thou and slip Into my bosom and be lost in me . . .

She gave a long sigh and looked up at Randolph. There was something in Charles's voice . . . she shivered . . . the music died.

"We'll go in," Randolph said, his arm about her.

Charles rose from the piano and faced them. He looked curiously dumb now, as if his singing were a thing completely apart; beside Randolph you thought of dying embers under an arc-light, yet there is no telling when the flame may not kindle anew in the ashes. Felicity had a queer sense of uncertainty, unreality; she knew suddenly that she badly wanted Charles to be pleased, and she knew as clearly that he was not.

Randolph said at once, "Congratulate me, Charles," and faced him defiantly, but Charles's eyes passed over him to Felicity's.

Inexplicably robbed of her poise, she found herself faltering excuses, "You must think . . . so soon . . ." Her voice trailed away.

He said quietly, "It's never too soonif you're certain. I congratulate youboth."

Randolph observed, "How about a spot of something to celebrate?" and drifted away.

Left alone, Felicity put out her hand impulsively. "You're pleased, Charles?" There was unconscious pleading in her voice.

think Randolph is—wonderfully lucky." Non-committal, but he held her hand rather longer than was strictly necessary, and she blushed—a creditable Victorian blush that none of Randolph's kisses had

succeeded in bringing to birth.

She said suddenly, "Be my friend, too,

Charles—please...

"Charles—their friend!" he mocked himself seriously. "Why—yes, Felicity, always . . . if I can."

Randolph returned in the wake of a

cobwebbed bottle. You had to celebrate in something rather special, and after a rare old wine you might feel splendidly wicked but never cheap or mean.

Charles proposed the toast, wondering mistily if you ever drank a health at a funeral. He felt he had been dying for

hours.

"I wish, darling," said Randolph sweetly and crossly, "that you wouldn't seduce my secretary from his duties. I know, of course, he's a relation and all that, and that you're physically and morally impossible to say no' to, but still, I do pay him and there is work to be done.'

He was sitting at a late breakfast with his fiancée a week after that night. Seven days that had left him so much more in love than he had ever been in his life that he felt by turns glorified and trapped; days that had left Felicity more fascinated, more disillusioned, dreadfully uncertain and not very happy.

"What hasn't Charles done?" she asked,

not looking at him.

"Well, he hasn't broken every bone in his body, though only God knows why he didn't." Felicity dropped her spoon noisily. "What he has done is to break his right arm trying to steal that one and only beech fern from the top of Bramber's wall for you early this morning. Of course the wall gave and brought him down with it—luckily on our side. I've a lawsuit coming on with Bramber, and it'd be awkward to be caught trespassing."

"Was he-badly hurt?" Felicity stirred her coffee as if her life depended on it. I didn't hear a doctor or anything."

"Oh, Charles managed to get round to him before coming home. I will say he never makes a fuss about himself, but it's a damned nuisance just now. There are papers about Bramber's business I don't want anyone else to see, and of course Charles can't type now."
"Can't you?"

"Good Lord, no! Never touched a machine in my life."

Felicity jerked her head up as if some-

thing had struck her.

"You—then does Charles type all your letters?"

"All but a few personal ones I have to scrawl myself." He strolled round the table to kiss her. "You're entrancing in that pink frock, darling."

His kiss did not stir her. She felt sud-

denly frozen. She said slowly, "Don't you even dictate your letters?"

"No, I leave 'em all to Charles. He's so dashed competent-knows what I

letters—typed every one, with their carefully forged signature—had utterly gone out of his mind; so confident he was that he had won her and could hold her without them.



ought to say far better than I do myself."

She laughed oddly. "Not always what you want to say, perhaps!"

"Not always." He laughed too. Those

"And then?"

"Oh, then there's a gorgeous mess-up—out of which I get him to extricate me. That's his job, you know." He kissed her again. "Au voir, darling, for five minutes.

The roan's gone dead lame. I must go round to the stable to see Blake." He departed whistling.

She found Charles in the study. Rather white, with his arm in a sling, trying awk-

self, but when the dog was hurt.... She said in one breath, "Charles, you're not fit to—I shall tell Randolph——" and, "It was—dear of you ... but I wish you hadn't ...!"



wardly to type with his left hand. Anger flared up in her at the sight. No need, certainly, to keep dogs and bark your-

"Hadn't what?" asked Charles, feeling fainter than ever at the sight of her. "Got the fern? My dear Felicity, I'd hate to

have played Humpty-Dumpty for nothing."

"You might have been killed-" Her

voice was not too steady.

"Oh no, people like me never get killed." He dragged a spoilt sheet from the typewriter and crumpled it up savagely.

She said, "I couldn't have born it,

if . . ."

"Oh yes, you could," he told her brutally, because he didn't dare be anything else. "An engaged girl can always bear anything that happens to the rest of the world."

She said very softly, watching him all the time, "Lovers? Ah, do you remember, Charles . . . 'So silently they one to th'

other come . . . '?"

"'As colours steale into the pear or plum . . .'" Scarcely knowing what he did, he finished the lines for her, and the thing that had been in his letters was in his eyes now.

She caught her breath. She had said that to Randolph last night, and he had not remembered. It had been in the last letter . . . she saw now that he had never known it. She said suddenly:

"You wrote those letters, Charles!"

Keeping a tight hold on himself, he said warily, "I write all Randolph's letters."

"Yes, but not personal ones—he told

me-----'

"Told you?" Misunderstanding, there was sudden anger in his eyes. "You were never to know... we agreed——"

"Ah! then it is true?"

He saw his mistake. "You said he had

told you. . . ."

"He said he had never touched a type-writer... I guessed then. You told me just now... that poem. 'Lovers, how they come and part.' Randolph didn't know it. You've been telling me all the time, really, only I was such a fool I didn't see."

He stammered desperately, "Telling you?

I don't understand.

She said quietly, "By just being you. Randolph could never have written the letters...they were yours, entirely, weren't they?" She added urgently, "Charles, I must know...it isn't fair to let me go on thinking him so—different...why did you do it?"

Goaded, he answered her, "It wasn't exactly in his line . . . he hardly ever writes letters . . . it was really my job, you

see. . . ."

"You mean he wouldn't bother, Charles?" She faced him steadily. "And if

he had, I don't think he could have written—like that."

"He could, Felicity, if he cared enough—he didn't then." He added with an effort, "But he does now. You're beginning to find the real Randolph."

She came close to him, searching his face, and knew with a queer little leap of her heart that the pain in the grey eyes and about the set lips was not wholly physical.

"You cared . . ." she said softly. "In these selfish modern days you cared what might happen to a wretched little schoolgirl with no people to look after her. You troubled to think she might find life difficult . . . coming out of the chrysalis stage . . . you didn't mind risking a snub, or laughter, or a whole heap of things, Charles . . . when you tried to help her . . . tell her how to live. And—you hadn't even seen her then. . . ."

He clenched his free hand at his side. "I had seen you . . . at the Opera in Paris—a year ago . . ." He stopped, going whiter still.

"That didn't alter things—you'd have done it anyhow. You're not the sort of man who gives his seat only to a pretty girl, Charles . . . that's one of the few things you leave to Randolph."

There was sudden scorn in her voice, and Charles clutched desperately at his breaking loyalty. There was the strain of Runnymede in him too.

"Felicity," he said very quietly, "don't get all wrong just because you're—disappointed in Randolph. You love him—you could make what you liked of him—the man of the letters . . . he's very near it now. You can't smash up his life—your own too—just for a few letters that—anyone might have written . . . remember, it's my job . . . writing letters." He steadied his voice. "That's not the thing you're in love with."

She said clearly, "It isn't Randolph. There are heaps of men like that about for any little fool to lose her head to—for that's all he had of me. I loved those letters, and if the glamour of Randolph hadn't blinded me, I'd have seen at once what I wanted." And then the colour flamed like a rose into her face, and she said hurriedly, without looking at him, "I—I love the man who wrote those letters. . . . I don't know if he loves me, but—but if he can write three times a week—like that—to a girl he doesn't love, then—then I think he's pretty dangerous . . . Charles . . ." Her voice broke

on his name between a laugh and a sob.

Charles broke too. "Darling heart . . . I adore you . . . always have. Why haven't I two arms?" but he managed quite successfully with one. "Felicity, I never dared dream. . . ." He kissed her rather masterfully considering how often he had scourged himself for arrogance. "But, darling, I've no right to ask you. . . . I haven't a penny really . . . only a few hundreds . . . and you're hideously rich."

"Your voice and your letters are enough for any girl to marry on," she murmured; "heaps have to start with less. Besides, Randolph will never consent, and then I

shan't have a penny."

Charles came back to earth with a crash. "Randolph! Heaven, I'd forgotten. . . ."

"Very pretty!" observed Randolph's voice from the doorway, strangely calm. And then—"I didn't think you'd be quite such a swine, Charles. . . ."

Charles let Felicity go, very gently, and all the light died out of his eyes. "You'd better leave us to settle this," he said quietly; but she stood her ground, facing Randolph, one hand resting still on Charles's shoulder.

"You're not to blame Charles . . . it wasn't his fault. It's yours, Randolph. . . . I'm sorry if I hurt you, but it's true. You see, I was half in love with you before we ever met—in imagination—and it was those letters that turned it into the real thing. When I came here you—you rather turned my head, you and Tye Gate—I couldn't see clearly—what I loved, but I've seen now. . . . Charles says I can't possibly love just letters . . . but I can love the spirit behind them. . . ."

Randolph interrupted fiercely, "He told

you he wrote them?"

"No, he never gave you away. You told me—you remember about the typing? And in other ways that you'll never understand.... Charles has been splendidly loyal to you all along—he wouldn't have kissed me now if I hadn't made him. Don't you see, Randolph, if you'd troubled you could have made me love you—in every way? But you didn't... you left it to Charles

to write to a troublesome schoolgirl. . . ."
"I never told him to make love to you,"

Randolph said bitterly.

"No, that just grew. In the beginning it was sheer goodness of heart and understanding, and there isn't too much of that in the world—that's why I clung to it, and the rest followed. Oh, I'm dreadfully sorry, Randolph, but it's all true. . . . I don't love you and I do love Charles."

Randolph stared at them both. In Charles's grey eyes was that look of dull agony that had been there when he had parted with the letters, and he found himself thinking honestly, "I don't believe I've ever loved like that," and then, "How damned uncomfortable it must be!" and felt a vague sense of relief.

He said a little stiffly, still rather sore and

aggrieved:

"I understand. In the circumstances I shan't dream of keeping you to your word, Felicity. As you say, it was my fault, but I told you—didn't I?—not to give me a halo!" He glanced at Charles again and shrugged lightly. "After all, I have to approve the man you choose, my dear, as you once said, and though naturally, at the moment, there are other people I prefer to Charles, I'm bound to own that he's entirely incapable of being any kind of a swine." He caught her hand, looking straight into her eyes. "You're quite the loveliest thing in the world, Felicity, and-it hurts a bit . . . but I know I could never live up to the letters. I must leave it to Charles—as usual!" Dropping her hand, he strolled to the door, careless, debonair as ever. The magnificent Randolph still.

At the door he turned. "I'd hate you to be sorry for me, so—if you'll forgive the ungallantry—I don't anticipate going into black for more than a month—or so. . . . All the best—to you both!" He might as well do the thing decently if old Charles had been, for once, the devil of a dog. There was always compensation in making the magnificent gesture at the last.

He looked back at them with a smile in which many things were beautifully blended . . . at the young Felicity and Charles . . .

still—"his Friend"!



SHORT STEPS TO KNOWLEDGE

Laurence Housman

AN UPSETTING INCIDENT.



WHEN Mary went to bed one night,

She had a sense of danger— A sort of fear that out of sight, Beneath it, lurked a stranger.

She dared not look, too well aware

That, if she raised the valance, And found a burglar really there,

Her brain would lose its balance.

And yet she was quite sure—for ah, An elder's mind is mulish!— That if she told her dear Mamma, Mamma would say "How foolish!"

And so, what strange device instead?—

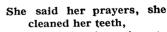
This foolish little daughter,

Took up and dashed beneath the bed A basinful of water!

Convinced, because no screams emerged,

That no one there lay hidden, Her customary course she urged To bed, as she was bidden.





She folded up her raiment; Nor ever guessed how, underneath,

Fate was preparing payment.

For ah !—how foolish not to guess !—

The tell-tale water stealing Down through the boards has made a mess,

And damped the parlour ceiling.



And only as, quick up the stairs,
She hears Mamma come running,
With guilty conscience she prepares
To face it out with cunning.

So speeding to the door she cries:

"Oh, Mother, hasten, hasten!

For very much to my surprise

I have upset the basin!"

Then to herself—deceitful Miss

She was! and don't forget it!—

She said, "Well, that is as it is!

I really did upset it."

But, at excuse so ill-expressed, Her mother did not heed

her mother did not need her.

So let us draw, across the

rest,
A curtain, gentle Reader!

Now how much better had it been, Had Mary, more confiding, Confessed her fears to Mrs.

Green,

And borne a Mother's chiding!





For then, no doubt, she would have said:
"Your sense has lost its balance.
A burglar underneath your bed?
Come, child, lift up the valance,

"And learn how foolish are your fears:—
As if there could have been one!"
And—had she looked—it now appears
She really would have seen one!

Or—as 'when hide-and-seek is played—

It would have been so thrilling (Supposing her Mamma had stayed

To mop up Mary's spilling)



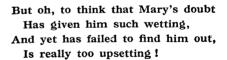
To watch, when first she felt his feet;

My! What a situation!
Almost sufficient to complete
A backward education.

And, terrified by such a case
Of female self-possession,
The burglar flat upon his face
Surrendering at discretion?

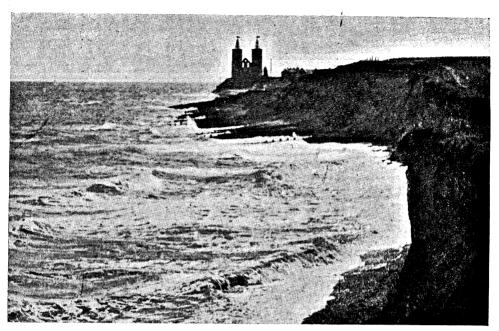
Then can't you fancy dear Mamma,

Her mind no longer mulish, Wagging a finger, crying "Ah! Come out, and don't be foolish!"





There, dumb though damp, the dark adept Waited his chance to pilfer; And that same night, while Mary slept, Stole off with all the silver!



THE TWIN TOWERS OF RECULVER, FAMILIAR TO ALL WHO USE THE HIGHWAY OF THE THAMES,

THE WATCH TOWERS • OF RECULVER •

By D. P. CAPPER

Photographs by Tower Studio, Herne Bay

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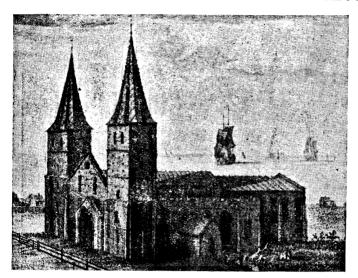
7 HERE the gravelly cliffs of Kent proper sink into the marshes of Thanet, two square towers rise strangely against sea and sky almost from the water's edge. Though the towers are familiar by sight to all mariners of experience, and to many thousands of holidaypassenger using the ${f Thames}$ makers steamers. Reculver itself on its last spur of hill is a lonely place indeed. On one side a couple of miles of turf lead to the holiday resort of Herne Bay, but beyond, low-lying land and shingle beach stretch far away to the white headlands of Birchington and Margate.

A ruined church, a Roman wall, perhaps a dozen cottages and a coastguard station, at the dead end of a lane, are all there is to bear the name to-day, though Reculver was a thriving seaport when the Thanet towns were petty hamlets.

No trace remains of the haven that once sheltered fleets of war. Harbour and houses lie under the sea. Year by year the tides have eaten into the coastline until all that one can see of the lost town is when the ebb uncovers on the "Black Rock" the foundations of some forgotten chapel. The process still goes on, and within living memory a road to Reculver has vanished over the cliff.

Yet the sea is not wholly to blame. Dominating a wide area of landscape, the twin towers seem to mount in stark protest

467 K I



ST. MARY'S CHURCH IN 1735.

From an Old Engraving.

from the skeleton of one of the oldest churches in the kingdom. That building, in which men worshipped for eleven hundred years as abbey, minster, and simple parish church, was wrecked and pillaged at last solely by its own servants. Even in its ruins it yearly attracts thousands of sightseers.

To the antiquary the entire site is a treasure-trove. In one day it was possible to see trenches being dug to locate Roman relics while other excavations were taking place in search of the older foundations of the church; and while one expert was seeking Palæolithic implements along the beach, another equally serious enthusiast was trying to identify more grisly finds. For Roman, Saxon, mediæval and recent burial-places lie close and are alike exposed by the crumbling of the cliff.

How old the site may be no one can say. Men of the Old Stone Age seem to have roamed freely over the district, but Reculver has an almost peculiar distinction. It is one of the few points in all England from which one can watch the sun both rise and set over water. At dawn the sun emerges from the horizon of the North Sea, to sink, in the west, into the waters of the Thames. This has suggested a theory that the place may have known special sanctity in pagan times.

A Celtic settlement was certainly on the spot before the coming of the Romans, and the Romans quickly recognised its strategic value. Reculver commanded the very

entrance to the sea-channel between the Thames and the Straits of Dover, for at that time between the Isle of Thanet and the mainland stretched the wide estuary of the Yenlade or Wantsum—now shrunken to a puny rivulet among the marshes.

Through this short cut, for a couple of centuries, to and fro between the coast of Gaul and London, rowed the Roman galleys. One at least came to grief on a shoal close inshore, and excellent pottery from her hold is still dredged up from the aptly named Pan Sands to seaward Reculver.

For the protection of the channel a fort was built at either end. While the southern one — at Richborough — has been left stranded inland by the receding sea, nearly half of its fellow at Reculver has been undermined and washed away. Historians have given a date to the erection of the northern fortress, ascribing it to the Emperor Severus, though his men may only have improved an existing stronghold.

It was an extraordinary fort this. Eight acres of land were enclosed by a square of massive stone walls, some ten feet thick, and apparently without a guard-tower or bastion of any kind. There was no need of an exterior ditch of the usual type: the sea, then covering the marshes of to-day, reached nearly to the walls on three sides.

Queerly enough, there are few signs of contemporary buildings inside the enclosure. A Roman cemetery has been found on the high ground to the westward; and coins of half a dozen Cæsars (some so clear-cut or so imperfect as to suggest a mint at the place), with a variety of weapons, household furniture and trinkets, have come to light at different times, but nothing more. All that can be seen is a newly-excavated well, the site of a wharf beside the walls, and the walls themselves.

Though here and there the sandy soil has been eroded from the foot, and small concrete buttresses have been needed, the greater part of the southern and most of the eastern face of the walls is still intact.

Built of flint and pebbles and local stone, the walls are now only a foot or two higher than their thickness; for the upper courses disappeared when thrifty house-builders of the past needed masonry. Among the blankets of ivy and the thicket of beech saplings that screen the stonework there are several fig-trees; descendants, perhaps, of some brought by the Legions from sunnier lands.

The Romans are partly responsible for the queer sound of "Reculver" by twisting the old Celtic name into "Regulbium." Philologists have differed in their usual way about its original derivation, but whether "the point against the waters" or "the watch tower" is its actual meaning, either is happy enough. As "culver" was the Anglo-Saxon word for pigeon, and as rock pigeons nest in the cliffs, one can almost accuse our Saxon forefathers of perpetrating a pun when they in turn altered the Latin name.

After the last Roman garrison—a Belgian cohort from Brabant—had held its final muster on the English shore, the next personage who comes on the scene in history is the famous Ethelbert of Kent. He built himself a palace on the seaward side of the fortress and there settled down to end his days. Local tradition declares that his

body was buried in the church and stoutly disputes a similar claim on behalf of St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury. As his tomb is lacking at either place, probably both will continue to share the honour.

In A.D. 665 his successor gave land at Reculver for the founding of a monastery, which soon acquired such eminence that one of its abbots became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Perhaps some freebooting crew of Danes found the monastery too conveniently near the sea, for, after flourishing for about three hundred years, it suddenly ceased to exist.

With the foundation of the abbey, however, begins the history of St. Mary's Church.

The original seventh-century building was long believed to have been adapted from a Roman prætorium or justice-hall, though the walls seem rather too thin for Roman work, and there are other objections. Still, Roman material is much in evidence in the lower part of the church ruins, and they include a large number of tiles, few of which appear in the walls of the fortress. The church, in addition, stands—or stood—in almost the exact centre of the area within the camp.

The largest tile has its own story. It is



ST. MARY'S CHURCH TO-DAY.

pointed out as the stone under which a live baby was interred, in accordance with the unpleasing pagan custom of endowing a new building for public use with "life."

Certain knowledge concerning the port and town of Reculver is as completely lost as is the town itself. There are records, however, of an avenging fleet of Saxon wargalleys lying in the roadstead to intercept one Oswald, an outlaw. A year or two later another outlaw—this time Godwin, Earl of Kent—made Reculver the rendezvous of his ships before sweeping up the Thames to claim his rights at London.

From time to time, as the importance of the town increased through the centuries, successive additions were made to the fabric of St. Mary's. With its enlarged size, it acquired new dignity as the mother church of four chapels-of-ease, three of which are now ministering to populous parishes of their own. (One—at Herne—afterwards became noted as the church in which Bishop Ridley, the martyr, preached as vicar.)

In course of time the upkeep of these churches was to reduce St. Mary's to poverty and eventually to ruin while her daughters grew in independence and wealth. But in the meantime the crowning glory was added to the old building.

In the sixteenth century, on the twin towers were erected "ii goodly spiring steples," as



ROMAN MATERIAL IN CHURCH WALL.

an enthusiastic writer of the period calls them. Seventy feet high they were, if his estimate is correct, and though the wooden steeples have gone the stout towers remain. One can still climb to an upper platform and look far over the county, into the Weald, or across the North Foreland at the shipping in the English Channel, or Londonwards beyond the dockyards of the Medway.

The name of "The Sisters" still clings to the towers. The story has it that they were built to fulfil a vow made by an abbess in memory of her sister who, shipwrecked with her off Reculver, reached the shore only to die in her arms.

Whether there is truth in the tale or not, the spires seem to have been intended as an aid to pilots. Standing up blackly above the coastline, they have guided many generations of seamen, and it was long customary for passing ships to dip their sails in reverence.

The northern tower has another, more gruesome, interest. About twenty feet from the ground there is an ancient platform fitted with a trap-door from which, with the aid of a halter and a beam high above, justice was meted out to sundry unknown. These unfortunates appear to have left no cheerless atmosphere behind them. For recently, during repair work on the church, the foreman of the Office of Works party provided himself with a snuggery by covering platform and trapdoor with a carpet. There he lived unperturbed by anything other than an onshore gale and the accompanying draughts.

At the time the spires were added Reculver was "a quarter of a myle from the se syde," and already the place had begun to decay. It had fallen from its dignity as a limb of the Cinque Ports. The Wantsum had ceased to be navigable; the marshes were drained; and the "se" came steadily landward.

In 1701 there were but twelve houses left standing, and eighty years later the whole length of the north wall of the Roman camp was undermined and toppled down to the beach. For a while the inhabitants made a rich harvest by salving the stones and carting them away to be used in the foundations of a pier at Margate.

This unexpected piece of business may have whetted their appetites for more profitable gleanings. Before the century was out, they had started the movement which ended in the real tragedy of Reculver, the destruction of St. Mary's Church.

All that can be urged on behalf of the

vandals is that the population of the parish had become too meagre and too poor to keep the fabric in repair; that the sea had actually encroached on the graves of the churchyard, and that the building itself seemed doomed. Far better to take in comfort any pickings there might be than allow the tides to have first choice: that was the current opinion.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury was approached, he — cautious man—was content to reply that the parish could settle its own affairs. The parish accordingly did.

A poll was taken and by a majority of one vote—the casting vote of the vicar—the parishioners decided that the church should be demolished.

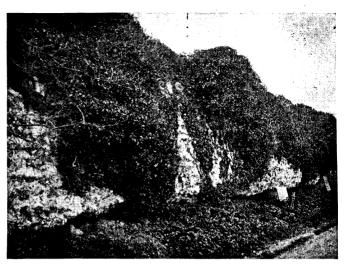
The vicar lacked humour as well as other qualities. In the words of his heart-broken sexton: "The last tax Mr. Naylor took was, 'Let your ways be the ways of rightness and your paths the peace,' and down come the church, and whot was 'is thoats about 'is flock that day no one knows."

Its beauty and wealth of ornament were as impotent to save it as its peculiar history. Its very size condemned it.

No time was wasted: when the solid masonry defied the efforts of the pick, gunpowder was used. All that was readily movable was swept away. The four bells and much of the material were disposed of to the highest bidder. The sale of the lead casting from the roof alone realised £900, and into whose pockets the money went remains a mystery. Two magnificent columns from the chancel were sold to a farmer for field rollers, but, luckily, after lying derelict for many years, these were discovered and set up in the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral, where they still stand and may be seen.

Some part of the material was used in the erection of a tiny parish church a couple of miles away, and more than stones was taken. All the marble and alabaster monuments and memorial tablets were torn down and crushed to rubble for pathways and flooring.

The new church was so badly built that



EAST WALL OF ROMAN CAMP.

it had soon to be demolished, and its successor—the third St. Mary's—contains still less of the original stonework. The few fragments of carved capitals of columns and coloured statuary that have been incorporated in the present edifice are eagerly scanned by experts for any light they may throw on the architecture of the old minster.

Before the ruins were entirely razed to the ground help came from an unexpected quarter. The Brethren of Trinity House realised their responsibilities where others failed. As the towers of Reculver formed a valuable landmark for seamen, the Corporation bought the site to prevent further destruction. At a total cost of £500 a protective "apron" and a system of groins were built round the exposed side of the church, and since that day not an inch of ground has been lost.

When one of the wooden spires from a tower was blown down during a gale, both were replaced by skeleton frameworks, none too pleasing to the eye, but otherwise the ruins have been most carefully preserved.

The Office of Works has now assumed charge of their upkeep and skilled craftsmen have completely overhauled the structure.

As lovingly as if the building were Westminster Abbey, all faulty masonry has been removed, and stones of an exactly similar kind have been smoothed by hand to resemble the weathering of the original and set in cement specially mixed to match the old work.

At the same time, part of the site was excavated, revealing that, both in the

twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the church had been practically rebuilt. No trace, however, was found of the tombs of Ethelbert and his queen. The area was then levelled and re-turfed, permanent markings being left to show the line of the foundations.

All that remains of one of the most ancient churches in the country—one unique in many respects—is now safe for posterity, provided the sea has no further claim.

Though the church and the Roman walls are the chief features of Reculver, there are others.

Two venerable cottages survive among their newer neighbours, and the visitor may still see smugglers' spy-holes and hear weird tales of mysterious crypts and underground passages.

Then Reculver is not without its ghosts. There is the bowed monk who paces downhill from the churchyard; there is the Roman soldier with his muscular arms, bronze breastplate and scarlet kilt; and—most popular, or unpopular, of all—there is King Ethelbert himself. According to another version, the rider is a lady, but there is no dispute about the horse. Shimmering white, it takes shape from above an old farm-house and comes galloping up the road between high banks. On its account few of the older country-folk, and not they only, will pass under a certain grove of trees by night.

But, alas, the summer evenings bring many wheels to Reculver, and what steed, real or ghostly, dare withstand a char-à-banc in a narrow lane?

A BALLAD OF PRIMROSE HILL.

ALWAYS thought of London
As overcrowded, full;
That all its streets were dust-strewn,
Its skies o'ercast and dull,
I never knew that Regent's Park
Could quiet be and still;
Or that the linnet and the lark
Thrilled over Primrose Hill.

But oh! to wake each morning

Near that sweet, gracious green,
And hear the wood-doves crooning
Behind a leafy screen.

And oh, to walk at even—

Let nights be warm or chill—
One is not far from Heaven,
A-top of Primrose Hill.

With all the lime-leaves dancing,
The lamps all shining bright;
A fairy-land entrancing
Looks London here by night.
I used to think in childhood—
And sometimes think so still—
I loved lone fields and wild wood,
But—give me Primrose Hill!

NORA TYNAN O'MAHONY.



THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY AND THE QUEENS OF ARVOR.

A BRETON FÉTE

By MAJOR GEORGE BRUCE

Photographs by Mary Grant Bruce

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OMETHING was clearly astir in the quaint little Breton town, for the streets were hung with flags, and above the stone steps of the Hôtel de Ville a double line of coloured electric lights was blazing, throwing into bold relief the bronze war-horse in the centre of the square, on which sat, sword in hand, the great Constable of Richemont, Arthur III, Duke of Brittany.

I had reached Vannes in the late afternoon, and had dined well at the Hostelry of the Sword. The lobsters of the Morbihan are second to none in flavour; no artichokes in France surpass those grown along the little Ruisseau de Rohan; and the good red wine of Anjou is no worse to-day than when its renown led the wild Breton clans to raid the vineyards of the Loire, in the far-off days when the sons of Clovis reigned in Neustria, Paris and Austrasia. Now, feeling at peace with all the world, I sat down

on the highest step of the Hôtel de Ville to enjoy a quiet cigarette and watch the passing crowd.

The great equestrian statue turned my thoughts to the past, to the long confused struggle of the War of Succession, when the two Jeannes, Jeanne la Flamme and Jeanne de Blois, took the place of their captive husbands and rode in mail at the head of their troops; when Walter de Manny stormed Vannes and drove Clisson from the walls; when du Guesclin made his name at Rennes, and Charles de Blois fought and fell at Auray; how before the war flickered out in a tangle of family feuds another great soldier had arisen, this Arthur de Richemont, whose obstinate valour almost saved the day at Agincourt, who was the friend and comrade of Joan of Arc, and who, after her death, carried to victory the banner she had raised, till before he died, Calais alone remained in the hands of the English.

Neglected by his King, the victories of Patay and Formigny forgotten by an ungrateful people, his end was even sadder than that of his namesake, Arthur, also a Duke, also a conqueror, whose gesture towards the broken windows of Apsley House showed his contempt for a mob who could forget that it was to him they owed their liberty.

Suddenly a flourish of trumpets rang through the air. Had my thoughts indeed carried me back to the fifteenth century? For round the corner of the Rue Thiers swung a guard of halberdiers in morions and steel breast-plates. Behind them ten mounted trumpeters blew a stirring march of ancient days, and then, each followed by his standard-bearer, rode Malo King at Arms, Herald of Brittany, in tabard of ermine, and beside him A Ma Vie, Herald of Vannes, his rose-coloured tabard bearing the ermine passant argent, the badge of the Slowly the cavalcade rode round the Square and halted in front of the Hôtel de Ville. Then, in a voice of thunder, the heralds proclaimed that under the auspices of the noble and puissant Seigneur, Arthur, Constable of Richemont, and in honour of the fair Lady, l'Hermine de Bretagne, the Constable de Richemont, with the Lords of Rohan, Beaumanoir and Léon, would hold the lists against all comers, at a Passage of Arms, to take place on the following day, and that all good knights, squires and gentlemen were invited to break a lance with them. The proclamation ended; another flourish of trumpets; and the procession moved on, followed by an immense crowd, not of townsfolk alone, for among them I could see many of the quaint old costumes both of men and women, which rarely appear nowadays except at some "pardon" in remote country places.

What did it all mean? I went back to the Hostelry of the Sword, and took counsel with the concierge, whose hands were even more eloquent of surprise than his words. "What? Monsieur does not know that to-morrow will take place the d'Arvor '? But yes! The Hermine de Bretagne will be there, and with her all the Queens of Arvor and their maids of honour. And in the afternoon there will be a Passage of Arms in the Jardin des Sports, a veritable battle! Oh no, Monsieur, not serious, but it will be a pretty sight, and will greatly amuse the children! And in the evening the gardens will be illuminated; there will be a concert of all the bands of the neighbourhood, and after that the old Breton dances, to the music of the biniou and the bombarde. Monsieur must really not miss the sight. It will be very interesting."

This whetted my curiosity, and I betook myself in search of further information. Luckily, I found the proprietor in the hotel office, and in a few minutes he gave me an account of the whole affair, and showed me a programme (eight pages, no less) of the morrow's events. It appeared that a retired Colonel, a Breton, steeped in ancient and medieval history, and fired by a true Celtic enthusiasm for the past greatness of his country, had conceived the idea of reviving the pride of Bretons in their heroic share in the glories of the Age of Chivalry, and awakening public interest in the old dress and customs of the country, now fast disappearing before Paris fashions and the levelling influence of primary schools. A strong committee was formed, and all the local institutions of Vannes, the Musical Societies, the Athletic Club, the Riding Club, the Clique de la Vannetaise, the Clique des Clissons, the Municipality and the shopkeepers of the city, joined to make the affair a success. Even the Colonel's enthusiasm, said the patron, could not have foreseen the way in which the idea swept the province. Every district was sending a girl chosen by popular vote to represent it as one of the Queens of Arvor —old Armorica—in the traditional dress of the locality; crowds had come from the farthest corners of Brittany, and the ancient city, a worthy setting for a pageant of the Middle Ages, was packed to its very walls. Those walls, still perfect in parts, with their machicolated towers and medieval gateways, were opened to the public, and all coming in the national Breton dress were to be admitted free to every part of the festival, including an exhibition of Breton arts and crafts, some dating from the fifteenth century and carrying on their business to the present day. Such was the scheme for the "Fêtes d'Arvor, and there was no doubt that, as the concierge had said, "it would be very interesting."

Half-past ten next morning found me sitting in the great hall of the Corn-market, facing a horseshoe of chairs, five deep, in the centre of which was a throne on an elevated daïs. A band in one corner of the hall played old Breton airs, strangely reminiscent of those of Ireland. At last there was a stir outside, and through an open door I caught a glimpse of a crowd of girls, among whom a number of women

were moving, with faces full of pride, evidently putting the last touches to the dress and adornments of their daughters. Then, led by a white-haired old gentleman with the rosette of the Legion in his buttonhole, the girls entered the hall in groups of three, each group wearing a different type of the old Breton costume. These were the Queens and their attendants. The whole assembly rose to their feet, the band burst into the stirring strains of the "Mar-

that all might see from what part of Brittany she came. The very names radiated an atmosphere of old days—names of the ancient towns of Armorica, Locminé, Ploermel, Concarneau, Paimpol; names which echoed the high deeds of the Middle Ages, Arradon, Rohan, Auray; names of the outer islands, Belle-Ile-en-Mer, Ile-de-Sein, Ile-aux-Moines; names from the Ar-mor, the seacoast, and from the Ar-goat, the highland forest, from the districts of Léon and



L'HERMINE DE BRETAGNE.

seillaise," and when the Queens and their maids of honour were seated, the *Hermine de Bretagne*, a tall graceful girl, in a robe of white silk trimmed with ermine, her lovely face surmounted by an elaborate fifteenth-century head-dress of white and gold, took her place on the central throne.

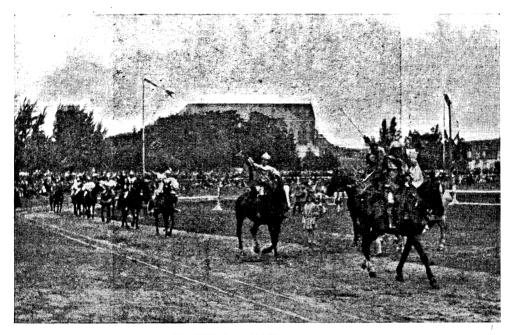
Now the Queens were called up, one by one, to the daïs, and the President of the Fêtes, a handsome matron, invested each with a broad sash of white silk, on which in gold letters was the name of her district,

Cornouailles, called by exiled Britons after their native Lyonesse and Cornwall, from the "Keïn Breiz," the craggy "back-bone of Brittany." And the costumes, especially the head-dresses and collars of embroidered net and lace, were as varied and as picturesque as the names. As each name was called, a burst of applause from different parts of the crowded hall showed where the partisans of each Queen had their place.

After a speech by a well-known archæologist and historian in which he welcomed *l'Hermine*, complimented the Queens and paid a tribute to the past glories of Brittany, the assembly broke up and went home to déjeuner.

Towards two o'clock I strolled through the narrow twisty streets of the old town, and passing the Porte St. Vincent, a relic of the old walls, which still bears on a shield of carved stone the ermine passant, I came out on the river and the quays. Early though it was, a crowd was already moving towards the Jardin des Sports, and a few minutes brought us to the old deep archway and heavy iron gate of the garden, formerly the pleasaunce of a

being all small children, dressed in the national costumes; the little bride in white, with a floating lace veil, toddling by the side of her eight-year-old husband in striped trousers, gold-embroidered waistcoat, black jacket with velvet pockets and collar, and broad-brimmed hat of black plush, bound round with heavy velvet streamers, the ends falling down his back. Bridesmaids, groomsmen, relations and friends followed, and in their rear came the Queens of Arvor, each wearing her white sash with the name of her district, and walking between her maids of honour. They formed a semicircle in front of the central stand, and then the Hermine



SALUTING THE QUEEN OF BEAUTY.

Carmelite monastery. The centre has now been turned into a cycle-racing track, banked, and surrounded by a railed terrace for spectators, in the middle of which is a large grass lawn. Upon this barriers had been erected for the jousts, and at each end were piles of spare lances, broadswords, battleaxes and long heavy daggers; of painted wood, but looking most realistic.

I found a seat on one of the stands facing the lists, and after half an hour's wait, during which more and more folk crowded into the garden, a great gate at the opposite side opened, and a long procession entered the grounds on foot. First came a charming pageant of a Breton wedding, the actors de Bretagne, the beautiful daughter of Duke Jean IV, escorted by the Marshal of the Lists, advanced and took her place on the throne of the Queen of Beauty. Round her assembled the notables of Vannes, many of them in the national dress, and among them, in uniform, his breast covered with medals and decorations, the man who had contrived and staged the pageant, a distinguished soldier, a historian and antiquary of note, and a charming writer.

A pretty ceremony followed, as the Queens were called up in turn to the throne and presented with large bouquets of flowers, after which they and their damsels were seated to right and left of the Queen of

Beauty. The children ranged themselves along the front of the stands, and the whole concourse waited expectantly, watching the gate at the far side of the arena.

Soon there was a stir in the crowd, and a low hum of voices, as the glitter of lance-points was seen above the gate. Then a flourish of trumpets sounded, the gate was again thrown open, and in rode four knights in complete armour, their surcoats showing the ermine of the Comte de Richemont, the blue and white chequers of Beaumanoir, the red with gold lozenges of Rohan and the black lion of Léon on a golden field. Riding up to the stand, they dismounted, and each in turn knelt before the Queen

surcoats showed the bearings of the noblest families of Brittany, Arradon, Largouët, Bureau, Le Gouazre, Parthenay, Malestroit, and riding beside his brother-in-law, the Vicomte de Raguenel, a tall knight bore the silver field and black eagle of du Guesclin. What if this were an anachronism? What if du Guesclin was dead some fifty years before this tournament could have taken place? The crowd recognised the arms of the most famous son of Brittany, the darling of all the ladies of France, the hero of all her knights, and cries of "Guesclin! Guesclin!" echoed across the lists. Republican though she be, France still keeps a warm corner in her memory for the men who carried the



BINIOU AND BOMBARDE PLAYERS.

of Beauty, who gave to each a ribbon of her colours, to be worn on his crest in the tournament. Then, mounting again, the four rode to the east end of the lists, where they waited behind a barrier on which their shields were hung, for the challengers to appear.

The heralds, Malo and A Ma Vie, now rode in with their escort of mounted trumpeters, and, saluting the Queen of Beauty, again made their proclamation of the Passage of Arms. Meanwhile, more lancepoints could be seen gathering outside the gate, and as the heralds ended their speech, the trumpets rang out a point of war, the gates once more swung back, and the challengers rode in. Eight in number, their

Golden Lilies to victory in many a tough fight, and the Vannetais have not forgotten the fiery leader who stormed their ducal fortress of Suscinio, tore down the leopards of England from its highest tower, and put to the sword every Englishman who held the walls.

Saluting the Queen of Beauty, the challengers retired to the west end of the lists, and the heralds announced that the Count of Arradon would first meet the Constable de Richemont. The two advanced at a gallop; the lances shivered on their armour, and turning, each rode to his own end, where a squire handed him a broadsword. Again they met in the middle, and blows rained on helmets and shoulders, till Arra-

don's weapon broke in his hand, and Richemont was acclaimed the victor.

Next came Beaumanoir and Raguenel, on foot this time, armed with sword and dagger. A fierce combat ensued, and when the swords broke, the champions seized battle-axes from their squires and renewed the fight, till Beaumanoir, with a mighty stroke, brought Raguenel to the ground. The fallen man's pages ran in, lifted him, and carried him from the field.

Rohan next met Bureau and unhelmed him smartly in the first charge. Léon and Largouët fought on foot, then Beaumanoir and Le Gouazre, and in both cases the challengers were defeated. Then came an excellent display between Rohan and du



PALUDIERS.
Salt-gatherers from the sea-marshes.

Guesclin, represented by two of the best horsemen of the Vannes Riding Club. They broke their lances fairly, then fought with swords, and when these too broke, with axes. At last a fierce blow struck Rohan's helmet from his head. He fell back on his horse's croup, pretending to be disabled, and slowly slid from his saddle to the ground. His pages, four boys, rushed to his help, and tried to carry him off, but he was a big man, and after dragging him a short way, they dropped him on the ground with a resounding bump and a clatter of armour. Amid roars of laughter from everyone, Rohan picked himself up, rocking with laughter himself, and retired to his place.

Léon fought Parthenay on foot, and defeated him after a realistic struggle, worthy

of two champions of the Vannes Athletic Club. Then followed the great fight of the day, between Richemont and Malestroit. First three courses with lances, after which the combatants leaped from their horses and fought on foot with swords, daggers and battleaxes. The weapons may have been only painted deal, the men just clean-bred athletic young Frenchmen of to-day, but the fight was exciting enough to make one realise the feelings of the crowd who, five centuries ago, watched two knightly champions hewing at each other in deadly earnest with such arms as were commonly used in war. At last Malestroit was vanquished, and Richemont, proclaimed by the heralds as the best knight of the tourney, was

> unhelmed and led by the Marshal of the Lists to the steps of the throne, where, kneeling, he received from the Queen of Beauty the prize of valour.

> Then followed a grand procession round the racing track. First came all the local bands, followed by the wedding pageant and the Queens of Arvor; behind these a crowd of folk in Breton costumes. among them the picturesque dresses of the paludiers, the salt-gatherers $_{
> m the}$ sea marshes, escorted by men playing on the biniou, the Breton bagpipes, and the bombarde, a wide-mouthed flageolet; the men-at-arms, pages and squires, behind

whom came the mounted trumpeters, followed by the heralds. Then, preceded by her ten pages in ermine, rode the Hermine de Bretagne, the Marshal of the Lists on her right hand. Behind them, two and two, rode the knights, first those who had held the lists, then the challengers, their gay surcoats now soiled and torn from the rough play of the Passage of Arms. Twice they went slowly round the track, while the spectators rose to their feet, cheering and applauding, then passed through the gate to make the circuit of Old Vannes, the town of narrow streets enclosed by the ancient walls, and so to the Hôtel de Ville, where the procession dispersed and all went home to their dinners.

At eight o'clock I was again in the Jardin

des Sports. The barriers had been cleared away, the piles of arms were gone, and on the great lawn was gathering a vast crowd, mostly in Breton dress. The gardens were lit with coloured lights, and in the centre of the lawn were four or five small platforms, each occupied by biniou and bombarde players. Soon these struck up a merry dance tune, the crowd quickly formed into rings, some large, some small, and began to dance the "Ridée," the Breton national dance, holding hands, swinging their arms in time to the music, and circling round in the steps of the ancient dance which some believe to have been handed down from prehistoric times, and to have been danced thousands of years ago round the altars of Carnac, Kerlescan, Menec, and a hundred other places where the megalithic people held their feasts and rituals. Certain it is that even at the present day the Breton peasants still revere these ancient stone monuments, and that in spite of the Church's strong disapproval, a form of worship actually takes place round some famous menhir or dolmen in far country districts. The people who danced the "ridée" in the Jardin des Sports evidently felt some excitement or elation which an outsider could not appreciate. Their faces showed this clearly, as the binious and bombardes skirled and shrieked, and more and more dancers crowded into the whirling rings. But to me the dance and the music soon grew monotonous, and after some two hours I was glad to slip out from the noisy crowd and wander quietly home through the silent moonlit streets, thinking to myself how deep, even in modern Republican France, is the memory of the past.

"There's a far bell ringing at the setting of the sun,
And a phantom voice is singing of the great days
done;

There's a far bell ringing
And a phantom voice is singing
Of renown for ever clinging to the great days
done."

I HAVE THE NEED OF MEADOW-LANDS.

HAVE the need of meadow-lands to-day
Where clean wind blows.

This fever in my veins has run too long, God knows, God knows! I need to be out where a river of bright grass Ripples and flows.

Beyond the city's farthest dusty street,
Its last tall spire,
Lie upland pastures, and the meadow-lands
Of my desire.
O, they could lave about me, and could cool
This inward fire!

Could I lie down awhile and let them sweep
About my head—
Could I lie down and sleep with meadow-grass
Piled for my bed—
I think I should arise, cool, clean, and strong—
Though I were dead.

GRACE NOLL CROWELL.

CRABS

By AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH INNS

ABS tucked a curl behind her ear and drew a fierce little breath. Half a dozen more stitches and the thing would be finished. She was sick of it, and what was the use, anyhow, of making yourself a pretty frock when everybody who looked at it would be wearing spectacles?

She glanced at the window. Yes, rain was still falling. What a holiday! What a world!

There, it was done! Babs threw needle. cottons, pins, into a small work-basket and hid the basket in a drawer of the massive wardrobe. Then she stretched herself, showing long slim legs and a body that could squirm like an eel. Babs's skin, winter and summer, had a tanned appearance, her eyes were big and brown and honest, her short hair curled into engaging ringlets round her head and was of a beautiful fiery brown. She had very pretty moments, usually sudden, and always unpremeditated. And all the time she was a dasher.

A bell rang below. Steps climbed the stair. A rat-a-rat sounded on the bedroom door; then Myra James entered, a slim young thing with golden locks and a rakish hat.

"Hullo. Been sewing, by the look of it. Is that the dress you told me about? Is it finished?" She thought about sitting on the bed, felt her damp clothes, and threw herself into an arm-chair.

"Just downed tools this minute," said "Fancy sewing on a holiday! But I couldn't think of anything else to do. I'll try the thing on, and you can tell me what you think of it. But, remember, I refuse to alter anything. I'd rather cast the whole biznai into the dustbin."

"Ah—then choose my dustbin, will you?" said Myra. "I could do with another frock at the Hydro. People dress up all the time. I say, that one looks spanking."

Babs was now in the frock. It proved to be a soft wine-coloured affair with cloudlike wings for sleeves, and a slim cut that was the last thing in cunning.

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"Lordy!" cried Myra: a sheer shout of admiration.

Babs was for a moment elated. all right, doesn't it?" she said, and wriggled in order to look into the wardrobe mirror.

"Any dustbin that gets that," said Myra, "will explode!"

Babs wasn't listening. Gloom was upon She pulled the frock off. As her bright head emerged she said crossly, "But what's the use of it all? Nobody here cares tuppence about frocks. Or, anyhow, they care lots more about just anything else."

Myra said, "Poor Babs. Isn't there any-

body young here?"

Babs shook her head. "Only a young man who looks for specimens," she said,

"and he isn't young, not really."
"He can't be," said Myra. "Listen, We're having an open dance at the Hydro on Saturday night—can ask outside people and all that. Well, I've got a guest ticket, and I jolly well invite you."

She said no more, for a whirlwind of a Babs fell upon her and demolished speech.

When Babs was again alone—Myra had an appointment with somebody or othershe went downstairs.

She knew just where to find her mother. Mrs. Carstairs was always to be discovered making life pleasant for the oldest and least attractive persons in the neighbourhood. So Babs came upon her in the lounge, helping Miss Crosse with an intricate crochet pattern and listening to the grousings about the weather of Miss Markham and Mr. Biggs.

Miss Markham was a fierce old lady with a stony conviction as to the brazenness of girls of the present day. She sewed a great deal: she said, for the poor, but when she spoke of the poor it was always with expressions of dislike. Mr. Biggs was a meek little retired clergyman with a rather bleak eye. Miss Markham talked quite a lot to Mr. Biggs: he had not mastered the

art of firm interruption.

In an arm-chair near this little group Aunt Phœbe reclined, as full of sleep as a summer bee. Aunt Phœbe was Mrs. Carstairs's aunt and Babs's great-aunt. It was on Aunt Phœbe's account that Mrs. Carstairs and her daughter were putting up at that very "quiet and comfortable" boarding-house "Vespers-Lea." But Mums always did take on some aged relative or friend for the summer holidays, and patronise some very dull—according to Babs's way of thinking—boarding-house on their account: she had a mania for helping the old.

"Mums, Myra has invited me to a dance—a little dance—at the Hydro on Saturday evening," Babs said eagerly. "I told her you'd love me to go."

"What's that, what's that?" broke in Miss Markham, fixing Babs with fierce grey eyes. "In my young days, young gels asked their parents' permission before they accepted invitations."

"I knew Mums would love me to go," persisted Babs. She glanced pleadingly at

her mother.

"There are dances and dances," contributed Miss Crosse, nodding a wise head. "If you are speaking about the Hydro, I believe the dances there—those that are open to outsiders—are very mixed. Yes, very mixed."

"The present craze for dancing," piped

up Mr. Biggs, "is deplorable-"

"I knew you would love me to go," said Babs, again appealing to her parent.

Mrs. Carstairs knit her brows. Then she looked from the pattern she was worrying out to Babs's eager face. That look was her undoing: Mrs. Carstairs had occasional twinges with respect to her young daughter. She said uncertainly, "I don't see quite how I can leave Aunt Phœbe. She might have one of her turns—"

"She would!" said Miss Crosse significantly. Miss Crosse was jealous of Aunt Phœbe, resenting Mrs. Carstairs's absorp-

tion in the old dame.

"Lordy, I can go alone!" burst out Babs. "Why, Myra's mother will be there."

Mrs. Carstairs in a rather worried way said, "Well then, I think you may go. And where are you off to now, my dear?"

"Outside—for a little fresh air," said

Babs.

"Is it raining still ?—Yes, it is," said Mr. Biggs.

"Rheumatic weather," said Miss Crosse.

"It won't hurt me," said Babs, and dashed

"Laying up for herself a rheumatic old age, I fear," said Miss Markham with a fierce sigh.

Babs, in hat and coat, went trudging down the rocky path to the beach. She found that to be deserted but for a party of bathers who were contemptuous of the rain. Their hilarity was somehow depressing. Babs departed.

The town was also rather quiet—Greenfallow was not much of a town anyhow. Babs looked about. The bus for Hudders Lea was just setting off; she waved to the driver, ran, and clambered aboard and on

top.

The rain now was a mere drizzle. The run to Hudders Lea was quite pretty, past green lanes and rain-laden leafy trees. Babs looked about the shops of Hudders Lea when she arrived there; then she made her way to the shore. It was deserted save for an absurd young man who lay prone on a small wooden landing-stage, a basket at his side, some kind of primitive rod in his hand, apparently fishing. His shock head was bare, his pleasantly shabby clothes appeared damp: he himself appeared happy and content.

That happiness and content drew Babs like a magnet. Besides, she wanted to see what he was fishing for with that absurd line. She approached, showing some interest, but not as much as she felt.

The young man gave a hurried glance in her direction. Then he became suddenly engrossed in his task, his eyes intent. In a moment he leant well over, lowered his basket, raised his rod. Almost, Babs felt breathlessly, he was falling into the sea. Then something fell back into the water, plop. The young man gave a hearty, but not approving, exclamation, set down his basket with a dump, and looked across at Babs. "Rotten luck," he said.

At that Babs drew nearer in a friendly way, striding the wooden stage to his side. "What are you fishing for?" she asked

"What are you fishing for?" she asked.
"Look," he said, and grimaced towards
the basket.

He had replaced its cover. Babs drew this aside, and looked. "Crabs!"

"Crabs it is," said the young man

cheerily. "And I have just lost one, a whopper. Perhaps he is still somewhere about. Like to join in? P'r'aps if you held the basket while I lured him on, we might have better luck."

"I'm game," said Babs. She dropped

down beside him.

"Used to do this kind of thing when I was a kid," said the young man, almost in a whisper. "Nothing doing elsewhere; thought I'd have a go at the old sport. Observe this rod? It's a walking-stick. I bought the basket at that frowsty old shop at the corner. We'll get another basket for you and go shares.'

Babs nodded. "I was rather bored."

she said.

The rain stopped. No fun in raining on two persons who were not noticing rain.

They got several relatives, but not the particular patriarch crab. "Basket's nearly full," announced Babs.

"Here; you have a go for him, and I'll run and get another basket," said the young

His name was Terry Whipple. He had told Babs so. Babs had told him her name. He also was staying at Greenfallow, it appeared. "Jolly little place," was his verdict. When Babs sighed, he asked her why. She told him. She felt that it was kind of Terry Whipple not to laugh.

When he returned with the second basket, "Hush-h-h," murmured Babs, without looking up.

"Sighted him?" whispered Terry,

scrambling down beside her.

"Gettin' him," said Babs importantly. Her cheeks crimsoned with excitement, her hat fell over her nose. The young man righted the hat. "Basket, please," murmured Babs.

Terry leant over with the basket, lower,

lower still.

"Got him, by Jove!" chuckled Terry. Then there was a loud splash. The crab was safe in the basket; but both basket and Terry had fallen into the bay.

Fortunately the water was fairly shallow. The young man scrambled out, dripping from the waist downward, clinging to the

"Got him still," he announced, and showed Babs the crab.

"Hurrah!" cried Babs. She added,

wrinkling her brows, "But you are dreadfully wet."

"Nothing to matter. I am often wet. Doesn't hurt me. Let us bag one or two more of these beauties," said the young man.

Babs gave him a smile that would have turned the head of any young man. It was so gorgeous to know somebody who could get wet with impunity, who needn't fly to bed and the comfort of hot-water bottles.

Terry Whipple realised that she was quite devastatingly pretty, besides being no end

of a sport.

They proceeded to bag other crabs.

The afternoon decided to end up kindly with the aid of an uncertain sun. People

began to drift down to the beach.

"Dear me," said the young man. at these folk: they have a comfortable air as if they had just had tea. Shall we have tea here or in Greenfallow?" He got up with an enterprising air.

"Who said anything about tea?" asked

Babs blandly.

"I did," said the young man, without

turning a hair.

Eventually they had tea at Hudders Lea. Terry Whipple was staying at the Raven Inn, Greenfallow. "Nothing like staying at an inn," he said to Babs as he ate buns. "You can do as you like, and nobody bothers about you. You should try it."

"But what about Aunt Phœbe?" asked

"We won't take Aunt Phœbe," said Terry

" What's that you say?" asked Babs with

a frown.

"I was saying," Terry said glibly, "that I have an old aunt somewhere around, but I don't cart her about with me.'

"You ought to talk to Mums," said Babs, sighing. "She says you ought to be kind

to old people."

"So you ought. I am," said Terry. added, "That's why I don't cart my old aunt around."

Babs reflected that it might be a good idea to get Terry to talk to Mums. But how explain Terry's acquaintanceship to Mums?

However, this difficulty faded away. For Terry, it appeared, was going to Saturday's dance at the Hydro. He could meet Mums afterwards.

"How many dances must you give to other people?" he enterprisingly inquired.

On the top of the bus on the homeward

way, Terry's basket on his lap, Babs's basket at her side, they talked of future days. Once Mums had made the acquaintance of Terry she would be sure to smile on him. "If you could manage to look a little—er—old, she'd take to you at once," said Babs.

"I don't mind parting with a front tooth or two," the young man said nobly, "if the removal can be rendered painless. You wouldn't believe the difference that kind of thing makes. Why, I might require to be spoon-fed——"

"Don't be silly," Babs said shortly. She added, "I don't care for toothless young men. But if you could pluck out a hair or two so that you seemed—well, not exactly

bald, of course, but-"

"No, thank you," Terry said, a hint of curtness in his tone. "I intend my hair to cling as long as it can. I haven't exactly pampered it, but I have given some time to its care, and——" He broke off, then said affably, for, after all, this girl was a rather nice kid, "I could of course wear a wig, just at first, you know, till your mother had got used to me—"

Babs shook her head. "Mums is quite clever in some ways—she'd spot the wig. P'r'aps it would be easier for you to be kind of invalidish—Oh, dear, what is the

matter?"

From a seat in front a lady had leapt in a most lively and natural manner and was doing a kind of war-dance. Another lady, rather less young and energetic, stood on her seat and showed signs of agitation. A small boy stared down at the floor, then started to hop this way and that. There was considerable movement and agitation everywhere.

The bus conductor ran upstairs.

Terry Whipple was looking into Babs's basket.

"I say, who let loose all them crabs?" demanded the conductor.

Babs crimsoned. She stared down at Terry. "Oh, are they mine?" she asked in dismay.

Terry said solemnly, "They are. But, cheerio, I'll take 'em on."

"Yours, did you say?" the conductor asked coldly. "Well, p'r'aps you'll tell me how to keep all them folk from goin' into highstericks?"

Terry slipped something into his palm that seemed to tell him how.

Babs fell into her seat, tucking up her

legs. She was almost ill with laughter.

The pair were rather unpopular when the crabs had been collected from the floor of the bus and replaced in their basket. But they sat tight, and ignored sundry rather caustic comments that wandered about the atmosphere.

When a man and a girl are rather absorbed in each other, little things like that——Well, they don't seem to mind 'em.

Babs burst into the lounge of Vespers-Lea with quite a jaunty air. Odd how different the world could appear at different times on one day. Undoubtedly rain was very depressing.

Mrs. Carstairs was not in the lounge, nor was anyone but Miss Markham, who

was still savagely sewing.

"I'll go upstairs," thought Babs, "and have another look at that frock. If I could find a hair-slide to match it——"

"Since when have you known my nephew?" Miss Markham asked in a fierce tone, fixing Babs with a penetrative glance.

Babs stared. Had the old lady gone suddenly mad? Had she . . . "I—I don't know him," she faltered. "Didn't know you had a nephew. You did say 'nephew,' didn't you?"

"I did," affirmed the lady grimly. "I watched you parting from him at the gate."

"Oh, I see. You mean that nice boy. You mean Terry Whipple. Oh, yes. He said he had an aunt. He said he didn't cart——"Babs broke off, after a run of feverish phrases.

"He said what? He didn't what?" demanded the lady suspiciously. "Sit down here by me, Babs. I want to get

to the bottom of this."

Babs unwillingly seated herself at the lady's side. Her basket she hid at her back: she wasn't going to be cross-examined about that.

"He said he didn't what?" reiterated the lady. "Out with it. I can bear any bitter truth. I didn't become old vesterday."

truth. I didn't become old yesterday."

"He wasn't bitter," protested Babs hotly. "I should think he never is. We were talking about being kind to people—old people; and Terry said he had an aunt whom he liked too much to cart about with him. I mean—""

"I know what you mean, and what he meant," snapped the lady. "Sensible lad, Terry. Moderation in all things. Common sense a virtue. Sticking like a limpet ain't

kindness. Young men can see too much of old women. Gels can, too. Have told vour mother so. Sensible woman, your mother, but too soft-hearted. Where did you meet my boy? Where is he staying? Doesn't know I am in Greenfallow. I don't cart a nephew about with me."

Babs chose the question that was most

round this evening and see me. Get all I want to know out of him." "Splendid idea," said Babs; and bolted.



"A sudden scream emanated from that sensitive spinster who, one arm stretched stiffly in front of her, was striking an attitude of terror over Miss Markham's workbasket. From the forefinger something dangled."

Babs did know but she hesitated. "Never mind, never mind," said the lady. quarters, she departed to look again at the "I'll ring the boy up, tell him to come new frock.

Having left her crabs in the kitchen

"Hullo!" said Terry, with a cheery grin. Babs was coming downstairs: Terry was on the door-mat. "Door lying open,

"I don't always want to," said he loftily.

"I say, what luck that an aunt of mine should be staying at your hotel!"

"Why?" Babs demanded.

Terry looked at her reproachfully. "Are you really so dense?" he asked at last.

"You pay one such dear little compliments," said Babs, grimacing. "It is a pleasure to hear you." She went on:

"Your aunt has a question or two to put to you. Where we met, and so forth."

Terry rubbed his thick hair. "Dearie me," he said in a frightened way.

"You may tell her the truth," Babs said consolingly. "I don't mind. We

nobody about. Under these circumstances you walk in," he said.

"Always?" questioned Babs, opening her eyes wide.

The young man refused to climb down.

are being introduced next Saturday at a dance—if anybody is keen about that kind of thing."

"Ah, so we are," reflected Terry in a

relieved tone.

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He added, "Of course, you rescued me from a watery grave."

"Clever boy. I had forgotten about

that," said Babs.

Most of the visitors at Vespers-Lea were in the drawing-room. A stoutish lady was at the piano and the young man who collected specimens was singing. Aunt Phœbe and Mrs. Carstairs were playing halma; Miss Crosse was again crocheting; Mr. Biggs was making himself unhappy over a crossword; Miss Markham sat on a couch in a central position, polishing her eye-glasses—a lengthy operation. Other persons were playing mild bridge and snoozing.

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Terry Whipple under his breath on being con-

fronted with this gay scene.

"Come here, I want to talk to you," said

Miss Markham to her nephew.

Her voice was fierce, but there was a pleasing gleam in her eye.

Babs was about to betake herself else-

where.

"You, too," said Miss Markham. "I believe you and my nephew are old friends."

Babs's brown eyes sparkled. She cast herself into the chair Terry offered and crossed slim legs. "I should love to listen while you two talk," she said modestly.

Miss Markham sniffed. "Girl can't be

well," she said.

Terry sailed along rather pleasantly, if dangerously, on the breeze of his aunt's interrogation. It was extraordinary how much the young man had to say and how little he communicated. Babs occasionally coughed at the end of his confidences.

"Dear Babs, I do hope you haven't caught cold," Terry said with affection and solici-

tude.

Babs said fiercely, "I never catch cold." "And, let me see, where did you say you met?" questioned Miss Markham for the fourth or fifth time.

"I seem to have forgotten the lady's name," said Terry, wrinkling his brows. He looked at Babs. "Let me see, was it Crabbe ?"

"No, I think it was Lyer," said Babs.

"Dear me—Lyer, did you say?—a nuncommon name, isn't it?" said Miss Markham. "How do you spell it? I knew some folk once whose name was Pyre: they didn't like it and spelt it P-y-e-r. Silly, I thought it."

"Names are interesting, aren't they?"

said Terry in a pleasant way. "I once knew a man-"

At this point Miss Crosse interrupted to beg for the loan of Miss Markham's scissors. The tangle of her crochet was quite hopeless.

"You'll find them in my work-basket—on the table there," said Miss Markham.

"Have you said good evening to Mrs. Carstairs?" Miss Markham asked her nephew. "I dislike the off-hand manners of the present day. Of course you know Babs's mother quite well. Strange she should never have mentioned you."

"I expect," Terry said modestly, "she

knows lots of young men."

Babs sighed. "I wish she did!" she said in a heartfelt way.

"I," said Terry, "don't."

"You might entice your mother over here," Miss Markham said to Babs. "I'm sure she must have had enough of that old woman. What's the matter with her, anyway, that she can't amuse herself? Yes, fetch your moth——"

Babs haddrever expected to owe anything to Miss Crosse; but at this moment she decidedly became indebted to that lady. For a sudden scream that rent the air and effectively drew the attention of Miss Markham, as of everybody else, emanated from that sensitive spinster who, one arm stretched stiffly in front of her, was striking an attitude of terror over Miss Markham's work-basket. Her horrified gaze was upon her own outstretched hand, from the forefinger of which something dangled.

Mr. Biggs approached at a timid run, the young man who collected specimens also rushed to the succour of Miss Crosse; but the first man there was Mr. Terry Whipple. "A crab, by Jove!" he cried. In a moment he had seized the monster and

wrapped it in a handkerchief.

"Not a very big one, fortunately," said he to the tearful Miss Crosse. "Where in the world did you find it?"

Miss Crosse cast a glance of indignation at her deliverer. "Quite big enough to cut my finger in two!" she retorted.

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Biggs soothingly.
"Quite a big crab. I caught sight of it.

Let me see the finger."

"Andit was in Miss Markham's work-basket. A cruel, a wicked trick, I call it," complained Miss Crosse in a manner slightly hysterical.

Mrs. Carstairs was now on the spot with lint and bandages and a basinful of water.

held out a handkerchief. "Does this crab

"I'm afraid it's mine," Babs said in a

belong to you?" he asked his aunt. "Mine?" began Miss Markham hoarsely.

"Is it likely—"

"Let me see the wound," she said gently. "Yes, let her see the wound. She will make it better," said Mr. Biggs. He was

rather enjoying himself in the rôle of gentle comforter.

"In my work-basket did she say?"

small voice. "I had a basketful of crabs broke out Miss Markham in a furious tone. by me when I was talking to you—you remember, just after I came in. I suppose a crab must have crawled from my basket into your work-basket." "Is she hurt?—that silly creature Miss Crosse, I mean?" Miss Marklam asked her nephew in a queer tone.

I won't dance with you,' said Babs, 'unless you tell me what you have been

doing.'
"'I have merely,' said Terry, 'anticipated events a bit.'"

"Do I usually carry live crabs about in my work-basket? Let me talk to her."

Babs caught the angry lady by the sleeve. "Oh, Miss Markham, listen," she began.
"I'm afraid it's all my fault. I can't help thinking-

Miss Markham fixed her with a glittering eye. "Do you mean that this affair is

At this moment Terry Whipple approached, his tanned face crinkled with smiles. He

Terry shook his head. "Skin isn't broken. Just the shock," he said.

"Ah, then I may laugh," said the lady. "Pray look as if you had made a joke."

She did laugh.

The laughter seemed to have a good effect. Miss Markham seemed almost ordinarily human.

"Take the young man along and introduce him to your mother," she said to

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Babs with a twinkle. "I am not quite as dense as I look."

As an unexpected result of the latest crab episode Miss Crosse became engaged to Mr. Biggs. It had occurred to the gentleman that an alliance with that nervous lady would at all events save him from the somewhat dominating Miss Markham.

Miss Markham, when she heard the news,

said, "Poor souls."

Babs, the wine-coloured frock on her slim form, her shining curls engagingly arranged, her eyes bright with excitement, swung into the Hydro.

"Lordy, what a vision! Tell me this, why did I invite you to come along and queer my pitch ? "exclaimed Myra at sight

of her.

"'Cause you can afford to," said Babs. "Can't believe I'm really in for a dance.

Seems too good to be true."

"You're very much in for one," said Myra, smiling cheerily. "I've got about a hundred young men, each one living on my promise that he may dance with you. You'll be booked up in half a twink—in fact, you are booked up. I've told 'em you're a topping dancer, and so you are. Goodness, what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing," Babs said airily. "A young man I met lately is coming to-night, that's all. I must keep a dance or two for

him."

"You'll be clever to do it," said Myra.

Babs looked dismayed.

"Dearie, don't worry," Myra advised her "'Good for healthy young men to hang around a bit, teaches 'em nice manners. And you haven't told me yet where you met him."

"I'll tell you as we go downstairs," said

"You're behaving very nicely to your poor little friend, aren't you?" grumbled Terry Whipple. He frowned crossly. He looked a bit hurt, too.

Babs, who had been happy-go-lucky and off-hand, relented. "You see, Myra didn't expect me to know anybody who was coming," she said, "so she fixed things

up for me."

Terry's brow cleared. "Leave it to me-I'll unfix one or two," said he. He disappeared.

At the end of that dance Babs found him awaiting her. "I've done it," he said iubilantly.

Babs looked thoughtful. "How?" she

asked, with a hint of suspicion.

"I'm an engineer," said Terry, "but my right place is in the diplomatic service."

"I won't dance with you," said Babs, "unless you tell me what you have been doing."

"I have merely," said Terry, "antici-

pated events a bit."

Babs swung round. "We'll miss this dance-or a bit of it," she said, "while you

Terry went meekly with her into the palm court. They sat down.

"Much nicer than dancing-this," said Terry cheerily. "Babs, I'm frightfully gone on you; what about marrying me? Think there might be anything doing?"

Babs turned her bright head away while she considered. But really the matter didn't require a great deal of consideration: she had known it would come up for discussion sooner or later, and knew her own mind.

"Might be," she said-"perhaps-later

"Then that's settled," said Terry, and kissed her.

"May I ask," Babs said a little later, "what all this has to do with the matter

we were first discussing?"

Terry looked her squarely in the eye. "If you want to know, that is the event that was slightly anticipated," he said. "If a girl's fiancé unexpectedly blows in at a dance, any other man will understand that the said fiancé will wish to dance with his girl---'

Babs was scarlet. "Unexpectedly blows in!" she cried. But these words hardly represented what she was quibbling at.

"Unexpectedly a fiancé, anyway," said Terry placidly. "That's to say unexpectedly so early a fiancé. I mean to say unexpectedly-"

"Thank you, you may drop the matter," Babs said loftily. "Shall we talk about

-er---- ? "

"Crabs?" suggested Terry. "They can be dropped, too-into ladies' work-baskets

At that moment he kissed her again.

Babs made no objection. She may have thought kissing preferable to talking about crabs.

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By J. J. BELL 0 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF EARLIER CHAPTERS.

ADY BALLANTYRE, an attractive young widow, is in financial difficulties through speculating in "Flossies." She is hoping that her son, Steve, whose money she has also risked, will become engaged to Winifred Charters, who has £80,000 of her own. But during a cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Ailsa Maclean, and he is arranging another trip in the *Miranda* during the following August. Luis, a young Spaniard whom Flora had "mothered" in boyhood, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father's papers had made

Lady Ballantyre, secretly ashamed, gets Luis to sell pictures and heirlooms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parch-

ment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory.

Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the Miranda party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young

partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa.

After a dinner-party, Hector dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it. He is a canny Scotsman and will not be disturbing the new floor on so doubtful a quest, for "what would the people of Tobermory think?"

Luis discovers beyond doubt that his secretary in Spain has been tampering with Lady Ballantyre's

letters. Possibly Muñez has already informed the Church authorities of the impending treasure hunt, and the persuasion of Hector Maclean will be but the first of a series of difficulties. Meanwhile Luis,

though deeply in love with Lady Ballantyre, has conceived a genuine regard for Ailsa Maclean.

Maclean eventually agrees to uncover the well, giving out as pretext that he has hopes of establishing a "sodda-water" factory. He and Ronald "will be keeping two eyes on every bit of stuff brought up." If the jewels are found he will claim fifty per cent of the proceeds on Ailsa's behalf, Luis and Lady Ballantyre can keep the remainder. Meanwhile, to divert suspicion, the *Miranda* is to continue her cruise.

Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, is much puzzled by the presence at Tobermory of a mysterious foreigner with a fast motor launch, especially when he discovers that M. Dracquier is sending

telegrams to Spain and hanging about in Hector's garden at dusk.

Unknown to Luis, Lady Ballantyre has continued her speculations, but from a carelessly sealed telegram handed to him by mistake, he discovers her deceit. Steve, who is addicted to drink, one evening finds Ailsa talking intimately to Luis and wearing an aquamarine pendant with which Lady Ballantyre, at the Spaniard's instigation, has presented her. In a fit of jealousy, Steve blurts out, "Before you accept his presents, Ailsa, you should ask him to tell you about the girl in the mountains of Spain and the man he murdered there, two years ago."

A few minutes later Steve realises what a cad he has been. In his contrition Winifred comforts him and he discovers his need of her. "Her coat was open. Within glimmered her white neck and breast....

Sanctuary."

XIX.

DISMANTLED, unfloored and dusty room is cheerless enough by daylight; illuminated by electricity, it is dismal in the extreme. So, at least, Hector Maclean appeared to be thinking as he glanced around the hall that so lately had been his pride.

"And all for nothing," he muttered; "all for nothing, except a devil of a

Along with Ronald he was standing at the verge of the well. It was ten o'clock.

Thirty-six hours had gone since the sending of the curt telegram to the Miranda at Portree; five since the two workmen, abandoning steel-pointed pole and dredge, had declared that the rock bottom was cleared of the last stray fragment.

"And it was the worst job I have ever had," said one of them. "No room to work in; and how can a man see what he is doing through six feet of dirty water? And if you are not satisfied, Mr. Maclean, you should get Colonel Foss's diver, or a steam pump that will be taking out the water quicker than it is coming in. And that is my advice

to you, Mr. Maclean!"

Excellent advice, though since seven o'clock Maclean and his partner had, with brief intervals for rest, been striving to prove it foolish. Their garments were damp and stained, their bodies weary and sweating.

Seventeen feet below, the black water which they had at last ceased to trouble, gleamed blandly, mockingly, under the light of a bulb suspended over the edge of the pit. Just above its surface was the plank, from which they, like the workmen before them, had wrought blindly, gropingly. A ladder was hung against the rough, rocky wall.

"It is no use going down again," said Maclean, pointing to a heap of wet rubbish and a couple of empty pails, with cords attached, on the temporary floor of rude planks. "There is nothing more to be got."

"Would it be worth while to go through that stuff again?" asked Ronald, indicating

the heap.

"No, no! We have handled every pound, both in here and out in the garden, that has come up since the men got to the water. Even if the casket had been broken in little pieces, we should have found some of them, and, of course, some of the jewels. No, no; it is all over, Ronald. We will go now and take a wee dram to ourselves, and then we will be getting to our beds. We can do with a long sleep, Cod knows! And, in the morning, you can take the motorboat and go over to Loch Drumbuie, and tell my cousin and Mr. Señor that we have all been chased by a wild goose."

"It is a great pity," said Ronald sadly, "that there will be nothing for Miss Ailsa,

after all."

"It is a devil of a pity. And what she will be saying to me when she sees this place, is not good to think about."

"Can you not keep them all away till

the place is put to rights again?"

"And when will that be? And I had a wire from her yesterday, sent from Portree, telling me, if the yacht was not coming back within three days, she would hire a motor-boat and come home by herself. I am thinking it has not been a very nice trip for her, but I am very glad she is feeling home-sick."

Ronald looked as though he were feeling glad, too. "Well, now," he said respectfully, "could you not be putting a few jewels in the well, yourself?"

"What?—And maybe not get them out again! I tell you, my lad, I have put more

than enough good money into that old well already! And now I will never be hearing the end of my sodda-water factory!
... But we will talk no more about it. I am completely fed up with the whole business. Come now and——" He turned towards the door of the dining-room.

"If you were putting some jewels into the well, Mr. Maclean, Miss Ailsa would surely get them out, for I would go down into the water and feel for them with my fingers."

Maclean halted. He turned slowly about

and regarded his junior.

"Were you saying that in earnest, Ronald?" he demanded.

"When did I ever say anything in fun?"

When, indeed, poor Ronald!

"You would go down into that black, cold water, with it over your head, and feel with your fingers?"

"Throw in some jewels, and you will

see!"

Maclean stroked his beard. "I have no jewels at present, and, anyway, I was not thinking," he said, with deliberation, "of throwing in any. . . . I was thinking that, maybe, the great treasure was there, after all, waiting for a man who would feel with his fingers. . . . What do you say?"

Ronald said nothing.

"Suppose, now, that the casket had got squeezed into a crack in the rock—eh?" A pause. "Suppose, moreover, that I had got the well filled up, never to be opened again, and you began to have dreams that the treasure was there after all; the treasure you might have found if—you had felt with your fingers. Those would be very bad dreams for you—would they not, Ronald?"

Ronald, looking into the pit, did not exactly shudder; rather, he winced. Many a time, from the stern of a boat, he had dived into the green deeps of the Sound; but to descend slowly, naked, into that liquid blackness, so long shut away from the smallest shaft of daylight, was another story. Superstition was not necessary to make his flesh creep. The black water was doubtless clean—it must, in its secret fashion, have been flowing in and flowing out all the time the well was closed—but imagination showed him, as it would have shown any man of his environment, blind and slimy, wriggling leech-like things, lurking in crannies, hungry for the sweet, red blood of human-kind. Ugh!...

"If you will do it, Ronald," said the old

man, "I will give you-"

Ronald threw out his hands. "I will do

it, and "-his head went up-" I will take

nothing!"

"By—, you are a man, Ronald! I do not believe there is another in Tobermory would go down there. . . . But when will you do it?"

"I will do it-now. May I go up to your

bedroom?"

"Ay, surely! Here is the key. But you will not be telling Ailsa how I was leaving my things about. You see, I am not caring for Kate to go into my room at present. It is maybe nothing at all, but there is too much kindness in her eye since Ailsa went away. I prefer to be a single widower. She can tidy up just before Ailsa comes home.
... Go up, my lad, and God bless you!"

OW their talk had been mainly in the trying to the patience of Monsieur François Dracquier, who stood outside, at the boarded window, his gaze to a slit which he had with the greatest caution widened slightly a few nights ago. Yet M. Dracquier had several things to be thankful for. A garden seat had its place convenient to the window, the boards were fastened on the outside with nothing more permanent than wire nails, and the broken pane, as he had noted in the course of his recent call on Mr. Maclean, had been completely removed. Also the moon had ceased to keep watch and strain his nerves, and only a few steps away was a shrubbery, a sure hiding-place.

At the same time, though the language be strange, one may learn much when one can guess what is being discussed; and since the Gaelic language lacks words of its own for many things more or less modern, and is seasoned accordingly with English words, M. Dracquier was able to gain at least an inkling of what was going forward. Indeed. what with his friendly chats with the two workmen in the Macdonald Arms and his own acute observations, he had a pretty good idea of the jewel-seekers' progress. To-night he could not doubt that a crisis was at hand, though in the past hour he had discerned the possibility of a fiasco. His duty to his employer—his master, in fact—in Toledo was, however, simply to watch and, if the chance came, act.

He had spied the land, so to speak, and, as far as he could see, was prepared. The grey motor-launch had made more than one trip to Oban, and the mechanic—a useful person, game for any venture with money and a big drink at the end of it—had made

certain purchases, which might, or might not, prove well worth their cost. These purchases included four of those short rope ladders which one occasionally sees hung over the sides of ships, and which the mechanic had skilfully made into a single ladder of a length between thirty and forty feet.

From Spain M. Dracquier had come prepared in another way—that of self-defence, as he would have termed it. He did not desire violence—violence, at any rate, of the cruder sort; and though he carried a knife and a revolver, he hoped sincerely that he would not have to use either. England. including Scotland, he had been long aware, was singularly narrow-minded on the use of defensive weapons. So he trusted mainly in a shining instrument, rather like a toy pistol, and the contents of a green glass bottle, with a rubber stopper, held in place by wire. But his hope was that, when the hour struck, he might find it possible simply to take what he had come for, and depart without hindrance.

Even without arms, M. Dracquier would not have been badly equipped. His daring was qualified by imagination; behind his impudence was a certain sense of humour. In short, he could be bold, without being rash. Gaspar Muñez could not have chosen a fitter man for the job. At the same time, Gaspar Muñez could no more than a British meteorologist have foreseen the weather up Tobermory way.

Meanwhile M. Dracquier kept his eye to the slit, and was not unamused by the perturbation of Hector Maclean, who was jigging from one foot to the other, his rumpled hair suggesting a lunatic, or a learned professor, while at frequent intervals he named aloud the Evil One. . . .

R ONALD came downstairs as nature had made him, except for a hand-towel round his loins, a bath-towel over his shoulders, and a cigarette under his moustache.

"Aha, my good, brave lad!" cried Maclean. "Even if your fingers find nothing, you will have done a great deed, and I will give you—"

"Be pleased to say nothing till I have

done something," said Ronald.

He threw his big towel to his partner and went cannily down the ladder. At the

bottom he gave a yelp.
"What is it?" wailed Maclean.

"It is colder than the snow, and I have lost my cigarette."

"Well, you cannot be smoking it under the water, anyway—and maybe it will have warmed the water a little wee bit."

"I am thinking we are both daft," said Ronald. "Now I am going down," he added in his native tongue; and "So long,"

Ronald came up and clutched the ladder, gasping.

"Nothing! Oh. but it cold. cold!"

"Come up, and take a wee dram." "So long!" He went down again.

> When he reappeared, blood was running down his face. "Nothing!" he announced, chittering.

> "My good lad—was something biting head?"

"Ay, the rock!... What cold! What dark! . . . So long!"

At his third rising, his face was bluish.

" N-nothing!"

"Go down no more, my good Ronald-no more!" Maclean called. "There cannot be anything, and I do not wish vour death."

"Once more. I thought I felt something, not rock, but my breath gave out. . . . So long!"

To Maclean it seemed that his partner would never come up. He was about to set foot on the ladder when the dark head broke the surface.

For a little while there was no sound but the diver's panting, then-

"Send down one of the buckets. I have got something, but it is heavy and slippery, and I am afraid of losing it again. Be quick!"

Trembling, Maclean let down one of the pails. Into it Ronald tumbled a shapeless object, some fifteen inches in its greatest dimension, covered thick with greyish slime.

Maclean hauled it up, and the finder followed.

"Never mind it now. am perished," chittered Ronald. " That thing is made of lead, I am sure."

"Then, by —, it is the casket of the jewels!

My lad, I will give you-" "A rub down and a glass of whisky, in the

name of goodness!"

"But your head!"

"Afterwards—the cold water has near stopped the blood. But—rub!"



"It was getting too much for M. Dracquier."

in English. He drew a great breath and slipped in, and under.

Maclean clasped his hands and stood, staring, muttering.

The surface became bland again; then a bubble broke it.

"Ronald, Ronald, come you up at once!" Another bubble. Maclean lost colour. He, too, had his visions of slimy, wriggling things. THOSE were rather tense moments for M. Dracquier. The thing he had scarce hoped to see lay within five yards of his hand. The two men seemed to have forgotten about it. M. Dracquier reflected.... The rope ladder was clamped to the parapet.

other boards, enter, and secure the casket! But that would mean crude, as well as rash, violence, not to mention a quick alarm. If only one of the men would go away! If only the door to the garden were not locked! M. Dracquier writhed in spirit. And—



Down in the bay, close in-shore, was the motor-launch, with anchor chain ready to be slipped, and the mechanic prepared to man the dinghy at the flash of a torch.

Easy to draw off the already loosened board and shoot both men, wrench off the

absurdly enough, he was dying for a cigar-ette.

WHILE Ronald, the bath towel about his waist, hastened the returning glow by flourishing his splendid arms, Mac-

lean, with a piece of sacking, wrought to remove the dark-grey, age-old slime from the shapeless thing, muttering, "It must-it

must surely be the casket!"

"I doubt the water has been getting in," he said at the end of a couple of minutes. "There must be a wee hole somewhere." He held it up in different positions, and at last a discoloured fluid began to dribble "Ugh! It smells of death!" he exclaimed, setting it in the pail to drain. "Maybe it is not the casket of jewels, after

"Cut it open, and see! The jewels would not be lying in it loose, anyway," said Ronald, sniffing and drawing back. "They would be wrapped in something, and it has rotted. Let us open-"

"We cannot open it till the others are here. I will not do anything that is under-

board."

"Would it not be wise to make sure, before I fetch the others? I do not wish to be chased by a wild goose, as you say. Make the wee hole bigger, and see if anything comes out. Afterwards you can close it up again."

Maclean considered briefly, and said: "That is not such a bad notion, Ronald. Then you will be able to tell them for certain whether it is the jewel casket. Get me a tool from the bench, yonder,"

Ronald went over and came back with a

screw-driver.

"Besides," he remarked, "it will let the filthy water out quicker."

tiny aperture, drove in the blade and gave it. a circular motion till the opening was about half an inch in diameter. On being restored to its former position, the casket emitted a stream of rank-smelling fluid, with which were mingled traces of some long-decayed fabric. Thus he held it till the flow had become a slow drip.

"Give it a shake, Mr. Maclean."

Maclean did so-once, twice-and at the third shake a small object splashed into the pail.

Ronald picked it out.

"That is not a jewel," the old man cried on a note of despair. "It is only a dirty pebble!"

"Wait!" Ronald took up a corner of the towel and wiped away the unclean

moisture.

A pear-shaped thing, dully red, lay on his

"A d-d bead," sighed Maclean.

"Wait!" Ronald breathed on it and rubbed it hard on the towel; breathed again and rubbed harder.

The film went, the smooth polished surface began to glow. . . . Once more Ronald

exhibited it on his palm.

"It is a jewel, sure enough-I think, a ruby," he said. "I have read and seen pictures of such things. Nowadays they make them to sparkle, but it may be that in the old days they just made them to shine. See!" He held it up to catch the light from a bulb. "It is like red wine!"

Maclean drew in his breath.

"So," Ronald said softly, "Miss Ailsa has the jewels that I felt for with my fingers."

"It beats all!" Maclean held out his "From this night you are my equal in the partnership, Ronald, for you have made Ailsa the richest girl in all the isles!"

"Maybe," said the young man, turning away, "it would be as well, before saying anything more, to give it another shake."

"No, no! It is enough! Here, put the jewel back, and I will close the hole."

Presently he did so, hammering the edges together with the handle of the screw-driver.

T was getting too much for M. Dracquier. That spot of crimson had excited him. His left hand went to the end of the loosened board, his right felt for his revolver. After all, finer feelings must not be allowed to interfere with business. He might never have a better chance. And it did not follow that he would have to shoot. The sudden Maclean reversed the casket, found the sight of the pointing revolver would almost certainly be enough for men so wrought up as these two.

Then he hesitated.

"YOU will be getting your death of cold," said Maclean. "Co up and cold," said Maclean. "Co up and put your clothes on."

"I am not cold now—though I have never

had the wee dram."

"God forgive me!" cried the old man, as one who has committed a crime. "We will have it now."

"There is no hurry. Tell me what is to be done about your friends on the yacht."

"As soon as you have had a bite of supper you will start in the motor-boat——"

"To-night!"

"It is not eleven yet. You can run across in less than an hour. They do not go to bed before midnight. And even if they were sleeping sound, they must come to-nightat once. Do you think I can rest before my

daughter knows about her fortune here?" He patted the casket which he had been

hugging in his arm.

Very well. I do not want any supper. I will be getting ready." Ronald moved along the temporary planks towards the stair.

A long minute passed before he reappeared with a glass, but without the casket.

He handed the glass to his partner, then made a gesture suggestive of the turning of a key, saying, "I was putting it in the safe." He used the English word, and chuckled at his astuteness.



"Father Macdonald picked it up and loosened the rubber stopper, but he did not need to bring it near his nose to tell what the contents had been."

M. DRACQUIER'S fingers fastened on the end of the board. If he could get the old man alone—only for a second or two. . . .

"WAIT!" said Maclean. "You must have the dram first. I will fetch it to you." And he stepped into the dining-room.

M. DRACQUIER murmured the Spanish equivalent of another English word, not, however, expressive of satisfaction. But the end, he told himself, was not yet, and he continued to watch, though the room was empty, Ronald having gone upstairs, Maclean to his office, presumably to enjoy his own "weedram."

A T the end of five minutes, Ronald, dressed, came down, lit a cigarette and took his cap from the bench.

"I am ready!" he called.

Maclean came at once. He looked at his watch. "Just eleven. Unless the Miranda has no steam—and that was not to happen after the Señor got the wire about the water—you should be back here, in this house, not much later than one. And if, by bad luck, they have not kept up steam, you must bring them over in the motor-boat."

"Who is to be brought? Who is to be

told about the casket?"

"Lady Ballantyre and Mr. Señor are to be told, and all are to be brought. It does not matter now who knows, but I wish it to be a surprise for Ailsa."

"Is the English girl to know?"

"Ho, yes!" Maclean chuckled. "She is a very nice girl, that Miss Charters, with her fine long legs and her eighty thousand pounds, and she will be extremely delighted, no doubt, to see my daughter, Ailsa, getting a million pounds or so! Ho, yes! Eighty thousand pounds! Piff!—and what is eighty thousand?... Well, well, it is going to be a great night for everybody, surely!"

They moved towards the door.

M. DRACQUIER, avoiding the heaps of rubbish from the well, slipped away into the shrubbery.

N the porch, Maclean shook hands with

his partner, saying:

"I do not know what I would be doing without you, Ronald. Good luck to you!" He pointed seawards. "I will be looking for the Miranda's lights from upstairs... In two hours!" He uttered the last three words—as was his way, sometimes, of being impressive—in English.

"So long!" said Ronald, and hurried off.

DRACQUIER returned $\mathbf{t}\mathbf{o}$ $_{
m the}$ Darkness boarded window. . . . within; only a band of light at the bottom of the dining-room door. He put away the idea of attacking the old man, securing his keys and going for the safe. A clumsy, risky method, and, for all he knew, yonder door was locked. Not weary in evil-doinghe had enjoyed a good sleep on the launch during the day—he decided to wait for the end of two hours. Once more he retired to the shrubbery and satisfied his craving for a cigarette.

At the end of ten minutes, through the still, heavy atmosphere, a sound came up to him from the Bay—the sound of a motorengine. Two minutes later, it occurred to him that the boat must be going at a pretty high speed, and he wondered idly whether his own grey launch could better it. . . .

As the white motor-boat dashed fussily out of the Bay, a steam-drifter bound for Oban came stolidly in. In her wheel-house Father Macdonald was thanking the skipper for the courtesy of a passage, one of his parishioners—not the old woman who had spoilt his holiday—having at the last moment, by the simple expedient of producing a baby, who seemed dubious as to the advantages of making a stay in this world, caused him to miss the mail-boat from his remote island.

"It was really a very great favour, Captain. I have but three days of my vacation left, and the next mail-boat would have

been no use."

"You are very welcome, Father. You is a fast little boat—my, what a speed!"

"I think she belongs to the daughter of my friend, Mr. Maclean, the merchant; and I was wondering where she might be going

at this time of night."

"Ah, you never know what young people, with a motor-boat, will be doing on a fine summer evening! But I hope whoever is running her now will not go too far. I am thinking there will be fog in the Sound before long."

"If it comes down now, it will delay your getting to Oban, and I shall be blaming myself for taking you off your course."

"Not at all, not at all! Your company has been a great pleasure. I hope it will happen again... Now they are making ready the boat to put you ashore—and you can be in your bed at the Mishnish before I am well out of the Bay. Good night—good night!"

Father Macdonald had telegraphed to the hotel of his coming, with the probable hour of his arrival, and the boots was at the jetty to take his suit-case.

"I am sorry to have kept you up," the priest said. "I shall not be wanting anything at all to-night. I had a good supper on the drifter. Are you giving me the nice room I had before?"

"No, sir. A lady has got that one. But you have one just as nice, looking on the Bay. You French gentleman had it, and he was very pleased."

"What? Is he gone?"

"This afternoon, sir. He was going to sleep on his launch, for he might be having an early start in the morning."

"Well, well! I suppose you never learned anything more about him?"

"Not a thing, sir. But he was a very kind

gentleman-very generous."

The priest smiled. "I am sorry I did not make his better acquaintance. A generous gentleman is, I would say, the second noblest work of God. And, once more, I am sorry"—a piece of silver passed—"to have kept you up so late. How warm it is in Tobermory!"

"Yes, we could be doing with a breeze. The French gentleman's launch is lying over yonder, close in to the trees, but it is too

dark to see a grey thing."

In his room, Father Macdonald raised the window to its widest, wiped his brows, and proceeded to unpack his suit-case. "This is one of the close nights I am afraid to go to bed," he reflected. "I will sit awhile at the window, on the chance that it grows cooler."

He drew open the top right-hand drawer of the dressing-table, and put in some of his belongings. Its neighbour was less easy in the fitting, and came out with a jerk, which caused some article lying at the rear to roll rather noisily forward.

It was a bottle of green glass, of what is known in this country as eight-ounce capacity, but its contour would have been unfamiliar to a British chemist. Father Macdonald picked it up and loosened the rubber stopper, but he did not need to bring it near his nose to tell what the contents had been. His eyes watered.

"Ammonia! Must have been powerful stuff!" he said to himself presently, examining the remnant of a label, most of its legend effaced by the powerful alkali.

Yet one line of print was still fairly legible

-Amoniaco Forte.

"Why, that's Spanish! . . . So I was right, after all!"

After a little while he switched off the light and seated himself at the open window. The sense of calm from air and sea was impressive. There were still occasional sounds on shore, but as he listened they diminished in number. A gramophone in a house along the street ceased; a door opened—voices and laughter—and closed; footfalls on the pavement died in the distance.

Silence.

Nothing now for the ear, but always something for the eye—the sky with its dim, shy stars, the glossy water of the Bay, the vague loom of Calve Islet, the darkness of the woods around and under Hector Maclean's home. . . .

It must have been after midnight when he fancied he saw among the trees, near the house, a tiny winking light. He felt more certain of the reality of another tiny, winking light on the water, at the point where he imagined the grey motor-launch lying at anchor. There was no reason why the launch should not have a light. On the contrary. Nevertheless, Father Macdonald wondered.

A further instalment of "Gambler's Hope" will appear in our next issue.

THE OLD LAVENDER BUSH.

Close to the old flagged path you know, long ago,
And summer by summer it still grows there
With its spikes of fragrant lavender,
Sweet and warm to the sunny air—
And so fair.

Mother planted a lavender bush long ago,
Gnarled and knotted and old, it still does grow,
And I sometimes think how good 'twould be
If busy folk like you and me
Could leave as sweet a memory
As did she.

DOROTHY DICKINSON.

Old Mr Martin.

Illustrated by Margaret W. Tarrant.

LD MR. MARTIN He keeps a small shop, I pass it each morning And sometimes I stop.

He stands in the doorway And says with a smile, "If you're not in a hurry Step in for awhile."

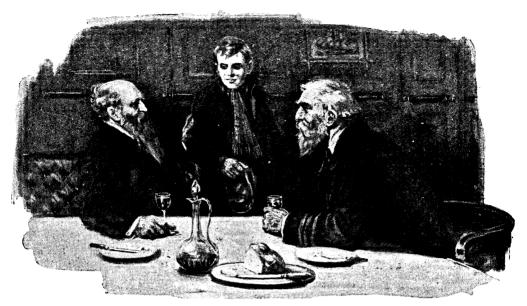
I follow him gladly And if you ask why, Well-I haven't a penny And don't want to buy.

When out I come later No parcel I bring, But I've talked to a parrot And heard bird sing.

Old Mr. Martin He keeps shop And a bird and parrot, And that's why I stop.

M. G. RHODES.





"The other of the two men took Peter by the arm and turned his head so that the light of the swinging lamp overhead shone on his face."

THE LAST OF THE SHELL-BACKS

By RALPH DURAND

■ ILLUSTRATED BY PERCY SPENCE
 ●

HOUGH Peter Andrews lived within sight of the sea—his widowed mother let lodgings in a third-rate summer resort a few miles out of Liverpool—he was under strict orders not to go near it. The prohibition was due, not to any particular fear on the part of Mrs. Andrews lest he should drown—the loss of any one of her ten children would have caused her grief but would have appreciably relieved the family purse—but because sea-water ruins boots, and boots cost money. But neither persuasion nor thrashing could keep Peter away from the sea. In calm weather he loved to clamber over the rocks at low tide,

groping for little green lady-crabs in the pools and watching the bullheads scuttle from crevice to crevice. When winter gales were blowing he loved still better to watch great grey-green waves, following each other in stately procession, curl and crash on the beach. Then, the thunder of the surf in his ears, the tang of salt spindrift on his lips, he became wild with excitement. He would wave his arms and shout and lose all sense of time, all fear of beatings, all thought of dinner.

Whenever wind and tide cast ashore a waterworn baulk of ship's timber Peter was entirely happy. He would strut up and

down it by the hour playing at being Nelson on the *Victory's* quarter-deck, Drake rounding the Horn, a pirate captain, Columbus sighting land, or—on Sundays—the Apostle from whom he took his name.

But as soon as he was thirteen he had to put away childish things and begin to help earn the family living. He was sweeping the floor of his employer's shop early one morning when—he had paused in his work a moment to refresh his soul with a glance at the sea—he saw a full-rigged ship coming in from the west, bound for Liverpool. Full-rigged ships were no novelty to him. Half a century ago more sailing ships than steamers came into the Mersey. But he had never before seen one under full sail so close inshore, and never one so rich in grace and beauty. As he stood and stared men swarmed aloft and lay out along her royal yards singing as they bunted up the flapping sails:

To my, ay, And we'll furl, ay, And we'll pay Paddy Doyle for his boots.

As he went about his duties during the rest of the morning the rough music rang in Peter's ears like a siren's song, and when the dinner-hour came, instead of going home, he buttoned his jacket, squared his elbows and set off for Liverpool at a dog-trot. There was an agonising stitch in his side and tears were very near his eyes when he reached the nearest of the Liverpool wharves. and it was difficult to find anyone who knew or cared where he would find the ship that had come in that morning. afternoon was half gone before a kindly pier-master told him that he had read the name Helen of Troy on her stern, and the sun had set before a ship-chandler's runner told him that he would find the Helen lying not a hundred yards away at Shaw's wharf.

There was no one on the Helen's deck but a surly watchman. Peter went on board and timidly asked if he might see the captain with a view to getting a berth as cabin-boy. The watchman said that the captain was at his supper, that the proper place to ask for a job aboard was at the ship's offices, and that in any case no crew would be signed on till the ship was ready for sea again. He then kicked Peter down the gangway and told him that he would get something worse than a kicking if he came on board again.

As soon as the watchman moved away Peter hid behind a stack of cotton bales

on the wharf. When it was fully dark he lowered himself cautiously over the wharf edge till he felt the Helen's stern mooring hawser between his thighs. The water, fifteen feet below his dangling toes, looked very dark and cold and deep. The hawser sagged alarmingly. But inch by inch he dragged himself along it, half sick with terror, his heart thumping painfully against his ribs, till he gained the ship's quarter and climbed over the rail on to the poop. He paused for a few minutes to get his breath and renew his courage, then dodging from one patch of darkness to another, lest the watchman should see him, made his way down into the saloon. Two men loitering over the remains of a meal sat back and stared at him.

"Please," said Peter. "I want to speak to the captain."

An immense social gulf yawns between the master of a clipper-ship and urchins of errand-boy rank. But the captain of the *Helen* was in a genial mood. He had just brought his vessel across the Atlantic from the Boston yards where she had been built; she had proved to be the kindliest ship he had ever handled, and he was proud of his new command.

"That's me, sonny," he said kindly.
"What do you want to speak to me about?"
"I want to go to sea on this ship."

"I've known a good many youngsters who thought they wanted to be shell-backs but changed their minds when they found what the life is like. It's a dog's life at sea. Fat salt pork and biscuit is what you'd have to eat from the time you leave soundings till you fetch port again. And the fatter the pork is, the more you'll eat of it, because the lean is too hard to chew. How would you fancy eating biscuit that's all alive and crawling with weevils? would you like to lie out along the fore-royalyard in a snowstorm furling sail with your finger-nails all broken and bleeding? You find a nice comfortable job ashore that'll give you all night in bed, my lad. Or I tell you what: if nothing but a taste of the life will cure you of wanting to go to sea, ship on some coasting craft that'll soon bring you home again. If you shipped with me you'd have to stick it for six months at the least: maybe a year or more."

"It's this ship that I want to go to sea on," said Peter doggedly.

"Why this ship in particular?"

Peter had used up the last reserves of his courage. He stood tongue-tied, fumbling

with his cap. He knew no words to describe the spell that the Helen's beauty had cast over him, and if he could have found them he would not have uttered them for fear of being thought silly.

The other of the two men took Peter by the arm and turned his head so that the light of the swinging lamp overhead shone

on his face.

"Speak up, boy," he said. "Why this ship in particular?"

I saw her furling her sails as she came in from sea and—and——" The man's eves lit up with a sympathetic light that seemed to promise Peter that he would not laugh at him if he opened his heart. "I thought her the most beautiful thing I had ever

The answer seemed to please the man

with the sympathetic eyes.

"So you thought that, did you? you hungry? Sit down and tuck into that bread and cheese and I'll tell you something while you are eating. Donald Mackay is my name. Likely you've never heard it, but it's known in every big port in the world. I'm a Boston shipbuilder and there are no finer clippers affoat than the Boston-built

clippers."
"That's a solid fact," said the captain. "I'm an Englishman, but I'll own to that. But it's having the timber so near to your hand that gives you the advantage, you

see."

Donald Mackay nodded.

"The Helen of Troy is the fiftieth clipper I've built," he continued, "and the last I'll ever build. When I got the order for her I was minded to refuse because I'd just signed the deeds for the purchase of the farm where I'm going to end my days. Then I thought I'd build just one ship more and see if I couldn't make her the finest ship that ever floated. She cost me more, Captain, than your owners have paid. Her frame is live oak throughout. All her skylights are mahogany. Her poop is There's not a plank in her Malabar teak. that has a knot in it. I had the best men in Massachusetts at work on her, for when word went round what I was at, shipwrights from Salem and Nantucket and New York came to me for jobs-not for higher pay but for the pride of having a hand in it. When her time comes to rot—as rot she must—she'll go all in one piece, for there isn't a weak spot in her."

"And that won't be in our time," said

the captain.

"Fifty years' experience and a century of tradition have gone into the making of her. There's French grace in her lines, English solidity in her framework, American ingenuity in the rigging of her, and Scotch honesty of workmanship throughout." Donald Mackay's voice had grown husky. He paused for a moment, then cleared his throat and went on: "I was satisfied with my work before the ship left the stocks, but it wasn't till she was afloat-we launched her full-rigged and she took the water as lightly as a feather dropped from the breast of a seabird—that I saw how well we had done. There was something about her. something you couldn't put a name to, that showed me that the Master Shipwright had guided my hand when I designed her, and the hand of every man that swung a mallet on her. Her owners didn't notice that. They came out in the tug to meet her at the bar, but none of them saw anything out of the way about her. But you did, boy. You saw-'' Mackay's voice broke. His face worked. When he could speak again he spoke on an entirely different subject.

"What does your mother say about your

going to sea, boy?" he asked.

"She doesn't know I want to go to sea."

"Then I'll come home with you now and talk to her about it. Slip away and wait

for me on the wharf."

"There's salt water in that boy's blood, Captain," said Donald Mackay when Peter was out of earshot. "If you'll take him to sea as an apprentice and teach him navigation and all that he should know, I'll gladly pay for his indentures and give him a good outfit. Under God's hand I've built a perfect ship and I'd like to have a share in making a perfect seaman."

Peter was silent all the way to his mother's house. Intoxicating hope that his mother would let him go to sea on the Helen and sickening fear lest she refuse tied his tongue. But when the stately ship put to sea six weeks later he was on board. As she cleared the harbour bar and rose gently to the first wave, when she began to spread her canvas, his heart felt too full of happiness to hold another drop. But life was soon to give him an even more deliriously happy hour.

Day broke next morning with broken scud flying across a pale green sky before a rising north-east wind. Great grey rollers were sweeping in from the Atlantic and leaping like wolves against the rugged Irish cliffs. The decks were sanded and fore-and-aft lifelines were rigged, but the precaution was scarcely necessary, for the *Helen* scarcely shipped so much as a dollop of spray, and she glided over the waves as smoothly as a trained athlete clears hurdles. Her lee rail was level with the water. The wind hummed shrilly in her stays and shrouds, and her wake foamed like a cataract.

As the sun rose a trail of smoke was sighted right ahead, but not till an hour later did the steamer's masts appear above the horizon. "By the Lord Harry, we're not meeting her—we're overtaking her!" exclaimed the captain in Peter's delighted hearing. "It's the New York mail-packet and she cleared from Liverpool six hours before we did." At noon, her decks scarcely wet, riding the waves like a seamew, the Helen passed the steamer wallowing in a cloud of smoke and spray, rolling her paddles under, her deck swept by every sea.

"May I call the Foo-Foo Band to give them a tune, sir?" asked the senior apprentice. Leave was given and the watch, after raiding the galley for tin-pans to beat, assembled on the poop to celebrate with appropriate music the sailing-ship's triumph

over steam.

Peter's heart was full to overflowing when he was told to dangle the end of a rope over the *Helen's* counter as a jocular invitation to the steamer to allow herself to be towed.

FROM that first voyage till the end of his long life Peter Andrews was of the true breed of shell-backs. Of the land and all that concerns the land beyond the ports of the world, he knew little and cared less. never read a newspaper, for to him sensational criminal trials, sectarian controversies or the doings of Urban District Councils were as remote as are Bulgarian politics to a Peckham Rye season-ticket holder. Helen was his home. He was third mate of her before he was out of his apprenticeship, first mate as soon as he had received his master mariner's certificate, and in command of her when he was twenty-five. He married and took his wife to sea on her and in due course taught his sons navigation in her chart-room.

But his sons never felt towards the stately ship as their father felt. To his unspoken disgust they "passed in steam" as soon as they got the chance. They said that sail had had its day. And they were right. In such clippers as the *Helen of Troy* the art of sailing-ship building had reached its zenith. Human ingenuity could not im-

prove on them. But every year steamers improved, became faster, more seaworthy, more economical to run. In the very year that the Helen was launched the opening of the Suez Canal killed the China tea-clipper trade, and the completion of the first Trans-American railroad made the land journey from San Francisco to New York shorter by ten thousand miles than the old sea route round the Horn. Though the Helen, when forty years old, could still show her stern to any steamer then afloat when she had a full gale behind her; though the Sovereign of the Seas once in the Roaring Forties attained a speed of 19 knots an hour; though the Cutty Sark, running the Easting down from the Cape to Melbourne averaged 360 miles a day for 10 days on end; though the Lightning broke a world record by sailing 436 sea miles in 24 consecutive hours: these splendid ships could not make swift passages when baffled with calms and head winds, and in the matter of running to a time-table, which is what modern trade demands, could not compete with even the most sluggish of cargo steamers.

Built to earn high freights by the swift carriage of perishable goods, the Helen was forced to tramp the world in search of cargoes—timber from Oregon, jute from Calcutta—such as it did not pay steamers to load. Sometimes she cruised in the South Seas, visiting a score of islands before she could find enough copra to fill her holds. Sometimes she lay for months at some lonely Peruvian island while her crew, degraded from seamen to navvies, toiled with spade and wheel-barrow to fill her with guano. It was as if a thoroughbred Arab were made to draw a dust-cart. Andrews's sons had good reason for saying that the days of the sailing-ship were done.

At the end of her forty-fifth year, after bringing home a cargo of Argentine hides, Captain Andrews received through the mouth of the firm's managing clerk a message that made his heart miss a beat.

"The Helen's to be sold, Captain," said the clerk. "This last year she hasn't earned

a clear four per cent."

"I've done my best," pleaded the skipper.
"It wasn't my fault that she lay four

months in quarantine at Santos."

"Nobody's blaming you. But the cold fact is that we can't make sail pay nowadays. The Dagoes can. They don't have to pay the wages we do and their crews can live on the smell of an oiled rag. I've been telling the firm for years past that it's no

use keeping windjammers that earn only four per cent while steamers earn ten. And at last they've realised it. How old are you?"

" Fifty-eight."

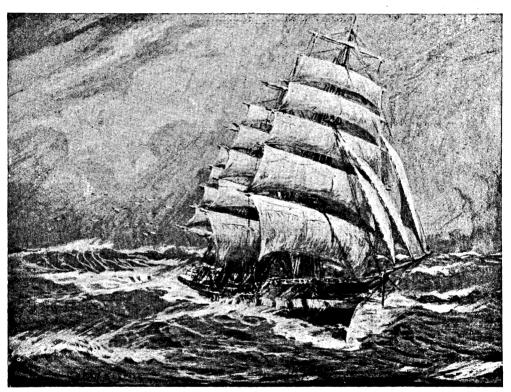
"A bit old to pass for steam in competition against a lot of youngsters, but if you can do it the firm will give you a first mate's berth on one of its steamers."

"I've never lost a man or a spar," said Andrews, as if he were being accused of incompetence. "It isn't every skipper that can say as much." "It's hard for an Englishman who has served all his life under the Union Jack to sail under a foreign flag," he said brokenly.

"There's no need for you to do that. I'll tell you what. If you can't manage to get a steamship certificate, I'll get the firm to let you start drawing your pension now."

"Where the *Helen* goes I go. Her deck has been my roof since first I went to sea. My wife lived on her since the day we were married, and died on her, and, God willing, I'll die on her too."

It was on the tip of the clerk's tongue to



"The wind hummed shrilly in her stays and shrouds, and her wake foamed like a cataract."

"I know you haven't. As a shell-back I don't know any man that's fit to walk the same poop with you. It's the ship I'm blaming."

"She's as sound as when she left the stocks. She has never needed recaulking. There isn't a ship affoat that costs less in repairs."

"If you can't see my point it's no use talking," said the clerk impatiently. "The *Helen* is to be sold and that's all there is to it. We know an Italian firm that'll buy her."

Andrews crushed his cap in his hands.

say that the *Helen's* next owners would probably insist on choosing a skipper from among their own countrymen. But he did not say it. He was a decent fellow and he was sorry that the old man took the scrapping of his ship so hardly.

"I'll tell you what, Skipper," he said.
"I'll persuade the firm to give the Helen one more chance. I'll get them to let you take her to Archangel in ballast to load sawn timber for Melbourne. By the time you get out there freights may have risen a bit."

Freights had risen more than a little

before the *Helen* reached Melbourne, for the Great War broke out while she was at sea and for four and a half years there were more cargoes to carry than ships to carry them. It was only during these war years that Andrews ever hazed his crews. Until then he had always trusted his men and his men had signed for voyage after voyage. But now the best men went into warships or mine-sweepers and he had to do the best he could with second-rate officers and the scourings of the seaports, men of no particular nationality, whom he drove to their work, like any bucko bluenose mate, with the toe of his seaboot. In stormy weather he kept the halliards padlocked lest sail should be shortened without his orders, and slept with a revolver under his pillow. So long as every ship under the Red Ensign was urgently needed, he said, the old Helen should do her bit to the utmost.

But when the War was over trade was so bad that in every port ships lay idle for lack of cargoes to carry. While steamers could find none to charter them there was no chance of employment for the *Helen of Troy*. She was paid off after her last homeward voyage and towed to a Cornish creek where she could lie at anchor without paying harbour dues. At current wages and current prices for junk she was not even worth the cost of breaking up.

Andrews—he had saved money and his needs were few-stayed on board at caretaker's wages. He was glad of the rest after the strain of the war years. He had scarcely ever seen the English countryside, and he liked to lean on the Helen's quarter watching plough-horses move slowly across and across the hillside. But he did not idle. One stiff-jointed old man cannot by himself do much in the way of keeping a full-rigged ship in trim, but he put in a full day's work each day, on deck or aloft, chipping and painting ironwork, oiling masts and spars, tarring, varnishing, doing all he could to preserve the Helen from rust and rot.

The easy, untroubled years slipped by unnoticed. Old Andrews had seen the fields whiten for harvest nine times when, one summer morning, a stranger came on board, introduced himself as the newly-appointed manager of the firm to which the *Helen* belonged, and announced that she was to be towed round to Falmouth to be broken up.

up.
"She won't fetch much," he said as callously as if he were selling old bottles,

"but she'll fetch something. At any rate, there's more sense in getting what we can for her than in paying a caretaker to live on her."

He was a young man, too young to know that he was talking to one of the finest seamen that ever took a clipper round the Horn. This time the old skipper made no attempt to save his ship. He knew that he had fought a losing fight against rust and rot and that the *Helen* would not be fit to carry a full spread of canvas without being overhauled from truck to kelson. But it hurt his pride to think that the *Helen* should make her last voyage ignominiously at the end of a tow rope.

"There's no need to tow her to Falmouth," he said. "I can sail her there for you."

"Finding a crew would be too much trouble. You've only to raise your finger outside any shipping office to get all the steamer A.B.'s you need, but men who have served their time in sail are hard to find nowadays."

Old Andrews sighed.

"It's true. I'm pretty nearly the last of the shell-backs, I suppose. But I shouldn't need a crew. With one man to help me I could get sail on her and take her round as soon as I got the chance of a fair wind."

The young man laughed at what he thought was the empty boast of a doddering old man.

"If you can get her to sea with only one man to help you," he said, "I'll give her to

you."

For the rest of the day old Andrews paced the deck thinking hard. Sometimes he stopped and looked aloft to follow the lead of some brace or halliard as if his memory were rusty as to its purpose. In the evening he got into his dingy, rowed ashore and sought out the local curate.

"Could you come aboard the *Helen* to-morrow afternoon?" he asked. "There's a job wants doing that needs a stronger pair

of arms than mine."

"I've got a choir practice in the evening.

I'm at your service till then."

The curate, a real West Country man, would have been a seaman if he had obeyed his inclination instead of his duty. He spent much of his leisure time on the *Helen's* poop listening to the old man's yarns of the spacious days of the clipper-ship; of the skipper of the *Sovereign of the Seas* who shipped a crew of convicts at Melbourne when his men deserted to try their luck on the gold-fields and, when the new crew attempted to seize the ship for the sake of



"When the poop was awash old Andrews bent the Red Ensign to the signal halliards, hoisted it mast high and broke it out."

the gold she was bringing home, clapped the whole lot in irons and worked the ship home with only his officers and apprentices; of the great race home from China, won by twelve short minutes, when the tea-clippers Taeping and Ariel left Foo-Chow within the same hour, passed through Sunda

the captain. "I'll come ashore for you in the dingy at half-past."

When the curate came down to the little weed-fringed fishing-quay next day he saw that all the *Helen's* square sails were hanging loose from her yards.

"What have you been doing to the old



Straits in the same afternoon, got separated, met again at the Lizard and raced up Channel beam to beam. Captain Andrews's yarns were soul-stirring, but detailed and highly technical, with the result that the curate had got to know the name of every brace and halliard and spar, from the flying jib-boom forward to the crojick aft.

"It'll be low water at one o'clock," said

ship?" he asked. "One would think you've been getting her ready for sea."

"A bit of an airing will do the sails good," said the old man evasively. "I've been up aloft since sunrise, pretty near, casting loose the gaskets."

They made the dingy fast to the *Helen's* quarter and climbed on board.

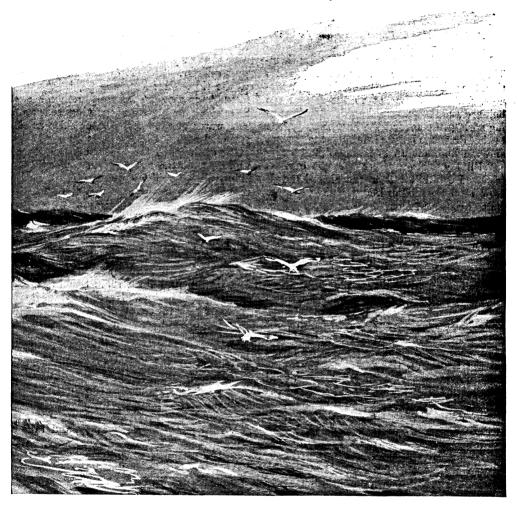
"We'll trim the yards first," said Andrews.

"Cast the main brace off its pin, lead the fall through a block and bring it to the capstan."

That everything on the Helen's last voyage should be done according to ancient prescribed ritual, he struck up a capstan shanty.

innocuous stanza the old man sang Sacramento instead.

In the Black Ball Line I served my time.
To me hoodah! To me hoodah!
Hurrah for the Black Ball Line!
Blow, my bullies, blow,
For Californio



In Amsterdam there dwelt a maid. Mark well what I do say. In Amsterdam there dwelt a maid And I'll go no more a-roving, With you, fair maid.

"Amsterdam" is the most beautiful of all sea shanties. Its music stirs the heart like the crash of breakers on a shingle beach. It is centuries old. Probably Drake's men sang it when they warped the Revenge out of Plymouth harbour to meet the Armada. But the words are Elizabethan and too gross for a curate's ears. After the first

There's plenty of gold, So I've been told, On the banks of the Sacramento.

"Now I'll show you a trick that the Board of Trade examiners don't know," said the skipper when the yards were trimmed. "We'll lead the topsail halliards to the cable locker and make them fast to the chain below the second shackle. Next we'll get a line out from the port quarter, carry it forward outside the shrouds and make that fast to the cable too."

When this was done they tautened the

line with the after capstan, straining at the capstan bars to the music of Rio Grande, a shanty with a refrain, Heave Ho Rio! O away Rio! that sounds like the call of a seabird in a rising wind.

"What's all this for?" asked the curate. "You'll see all in good time. We'll get

the foretopmast staysail on her next."

They hoisted it to the shanty:

A fine full-rigged clipper was ready for sea Away hay-blow the man down.

But the flying jib was too heavy for them-They hoisted it as far as they could by hand, then the skipper, chuckling at his own cleverness, fastened a bucket to the fall of the halliard and threw it overboard. The incoming spring tide carried the bucket away, the bucket drew the halliard through the sheave, and the jib went up to its appointed place.

"I'll lay Nelson never thought of that trick. He didn't put to sea short-handed. Now stop the halliard, and make fast. isn't Bristol fashion, but it'll do. Run forrad now and slack away the chain one

cable's length."

The chain roared out through the hawsehole till it was brought up with a jerk that made the *Helen* quiver. Having been made fast to the topsail halliards, it dragged them with it and the topsail yards went up into

"A steamer skipper wouldn't have thought of that. Now we'll sheet 'em home and then we'll lay off and call it a dog watch

till the tide is on the turn."

"You've time now to tell me what all this is for," said the curate as he filled his

"The old ship is going home. Her work is done and her owners haven't any more use for her, so they've given her to me and I'm going to take her home."

"To Falmouth, I suppose? The old

Cutty Sark is lying at Falmouth."

"There or thereabouts. It don't make much odds where an old hulk lies-unless maybe she's got feelings of her own about it. Looks to me as if the breeze will freshen when the tide turns. We'll have a fair wind all the way—all the way home."

The curate's eyes glistened. He no more doubted that old Andrews could take the ship to Falmouth with only himself for crew than he doubted the tale of four men and four boys bringing the Sovereign of the Seas home round the Horn. He thanked his stars for the chance to join in so splendid an adventure. As for the choir !-- they could do without him for once.

At the turn of the tide the *Helen's* cable sagged. Andrews went below for an axe, then came aft to the wheel.

"Go forrad now, Mister, and unshackle the cable at the second shackle. You'll find a sledge-hammer in the chain locker. Then throw the pawl off the windlass so

that the cable will run out."

When this was done the *Helen* was held no longer by the cable, which had dropped to the bottom of the harbour, but by the rope that they had carried forward from the port quarter. The ship came broadside on to the tide. Her headsails filled. filled Andrews cut the rope with his axe. She was now free and moving seawards. The water gurgled against her sides as she gathered way.

"I can't leave the helm now, Mister, so you must do the rest by yourself," said the skipper. "You'll find plenty buckets under the break of the poop. Get the staysails and spanker on her same way as we hoisted the flying jib. The tide won't help now, but we are making enough way to make the

buckets draw.'

By the time the spanker and staysails were hoisted the Helen of Troy was well on her way to the open sea. She lifted her bows to the first swell and quivered as if with delight to be at sea again. As the harbour opened out first her topgallant sails caught the breeze, then the topsails, then the mainsail filled. A wave curled from her bow. Her wake whitened.

"I don't need any more help, Mister. You'd best slip ashore in the dingy."

"Not I!" said the curate. "I'm coming

to Falmouth with you."

"Then jump into the dingy and take a turn of the painter round a thwart. ease the strain of towing."

The curate hauled the dingy under the Helen's counter and jumped into it. soon as he had done so Andrews picked up his axe and cut the painter.

"You can't come with me, lad," he shouted as the dingy dropped astern.

"You've got your work to do."

As she cleared the headland the Helen caught the full force of the offshore wind that was blowing in strong gusts off the land. Ten years before she would have leapt before it as a thoroughbred springs forward to a touch of its rider's heel. But nine years' growth of seaweed on her hull deadened her movement. Her sails filled but the hull responded sluggishly. It was as if the old ship felt tired and languid.

So expert a master-mariner as old Andrews must have foreseen the possibility of what happened. Had he still been sailing the ship for her owners, he would have taken her out to sea under easy sail instead of spreading all the canvas he could spread. But the *Helen* was his own property now, and he could do as he willed with her. The sluggishness of the weed-grown hull doubled the strain on the masts and the stays that supported them. Her masts were as stout as ever, but her stays were corroded with nine years' rust. The mainstay snapped under the strain. In quick succession the foretopgallant stay, the forestay, the backstay parted. Even now the old skipper could have saved his ship if he had taken his axe, cut away all halliards and let the sails come down with a run. But he stayed at the wheel and steered for the open sea.

The masts, having now nothing but the shrouds to hold them, wrenched at the hull, tearing it open as crowbars tear open a packing-case. Water poured in through all the seams. Soon the *Helen* was too waterlogged to rise to the waves. They broke over her as waves break over the head of a spent swimmer, dragging her down and down. When the poop was awash old Andrews bent the Red Ensign to the signal halliards, hoisted it mast high and broke it out. As the tattered flag fluttered free the *Helen* dived. The sea closed over her and over the head of the man who loved her too well to leave her.

So passed the last of the shell-backs.

DEAR ENGLAND.

WHEN gentle breezes wave your grass
And swallows' wings dip in your streams,
When fleecy clouds above you pass
And sunshine fills the days with dreams,
Dear England, take me to your heart,
Lead me to some sequestered nook,
That I may be with you apart
To catch the music of a brook.

What ecstasy when you unfold Your treasures to my eager eyes:
A field spread with a cloth of gold;
A rainbow where a frail bird flies;
Within a wood a maze of blue;
A rabbit anxious to be gone;
A splashing, and with much ado
The snowdrift of a flying swan.

Fairest of all, divinely fair,
Dear England you have ever been
A sanctuary far from care
With rolling hills and valleys green.
To find where peace and quiet reign
And where sweet beauty builds her nest
I search the whole wide world in vain,
Until in England ends my quest.



FIRST AID.

Wife (excitedly, to husband, as dog hangs on to seat of his trousers): Don't run, Reginald, don't run. Sit on him!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

By W. E. Richards

W E play bridge, a kind of bridge, and snooker, a kind of snooker, at Marine View, but the game we are really best at is a guessing game. We guess the professions of our fellow guests. Scotland Yard could do it no better.

Barbara and I had lived through the first day under the observation of a dozen pair of eyes, all anxiously collecting clues. It is always an embarrassing day in a strange boarding house, and we longed for the time when observation would be focussed on some more recent arrival.

On the second day, the same atmosphere of uneasy suspicion enveloped us. A hasty pat assured me my tie was in its accustomed place, and I was certain my braces were functioning properly. Yet we were watched to our seats. The easy seaside chatter had died away. The ladies spoke in fluting voices, while the men grunted monosyllabically.

Manners, too, had become elaborate. You remember how the old-time actor used to dis-

appear when the plot no longer required him? "Excuse me," he would boom, up centre, "I have a letter to write." We developed manners like that. They didn't seem to suit Marine View.

Bridge afterwards was played with so much epigram and decorative effects that it was less like bridge than usual—if that were possible. Every man made excuses when I suggested a game of snooker. In fact, the men, politely but firmly, sent me to Coventry.

But their wives made up for this. I have never been so popular with the ladies before. No less than six of them waylaid me during the course of the day and poured in my ears the story of their lives. I have never heard so many stories before. I hope and trust they were stories. The others waylaid Barbara and, pledging her to secrecy, unbared the romantic longings of their hearts.

"You must on no account," they urged, "tell your husband."

"Of course not," said Barbara.

"But he'll see you have something on your mind. He'll probe into it with those far-seeing eyes. Perhaps you'll have to tell him a teeny bit. Without names, of course. I think a husband and wife ought to share all things, don't you? And he would be so interested. Mine isn't an ordinary psychology, and I couldn't lay my mind bare to him, could I?"

"Certainly not," admitted Barbara, who was scandalised at the contents of their minds.

I was decidedly popular with the ladies, but missed $\mathbf{m}\mathbf{v}$ game at snooker.

In the smoking-room the men conversed over my body. I wasn't exactly turned out of the room, but I was given to understand I wasn't wanted.

"Look \mathbf{at} this." said Tompkins, crackling his evening paper. "Novelist pays a thousand damages for putting real people in a novel."

"Serve the bounder right,"

grunted the others.

"What's a thousand." complained Tompkins, "to author? a successful wouldn't cringe for damages in a court of law.'

"And what would you

do?" we asked.

"If one of these writing fellows started worming out my history to put in a book," he asserted, glaring in my direction, "I'd horsewhip him."

"Hear! hear!" everybody, glaring in my direction.

"Hear! hear!" I echoed, a little unsteadily.

"And if he listened—if he only just listened to anv nonsense my wife told him," he continued, dangerously, "I'd horse whip him until he couldn't stand."

I moistened my lips. His wife had just told me her life story.

"I believe they can insure against this sort of thing," suggested

"He'd get my horse-whipping first," declared Tompkins grimly, measuring me with his eye.

"I'm g-glad," I stammered, trying to hold my match steadily, "I'm not a wr-writer."
"But, but——" spluttered Tompkins.

"I'm an underwriter," I explained. "Natural mistake. Shouldn't do that sort of thing, you know; not decent."

We smoked in silence until Tompkins asked me with elaborate heartiness to join him at snooker. But Marine View was never quite the same again. The ladies, who could not forget I was in possession of their life stories, cut me dead. The men were still cool. They felt they had been cheated out of an exhibition of horsewhipping.

We are just going out to find private

rooms.



THE LITTLE DIFFERENCE.

FIRST HOLIDAY MAKER: What's the food like where you're staving?

SECOND HOLIDAY MAKER: Oh, nothing extra—what's it like where you are?

FIRST HOLIDAY MAKER: Oh, everything extra!

A WELL-KNOWN dramatic critic declares that the English playgoers are snobs.

Those in the gallery certainly look down on the stage.

요요요

"Woman Kills Adder," reads a heading in a newspaper.

Personally, we are most kind to chartered accountants.



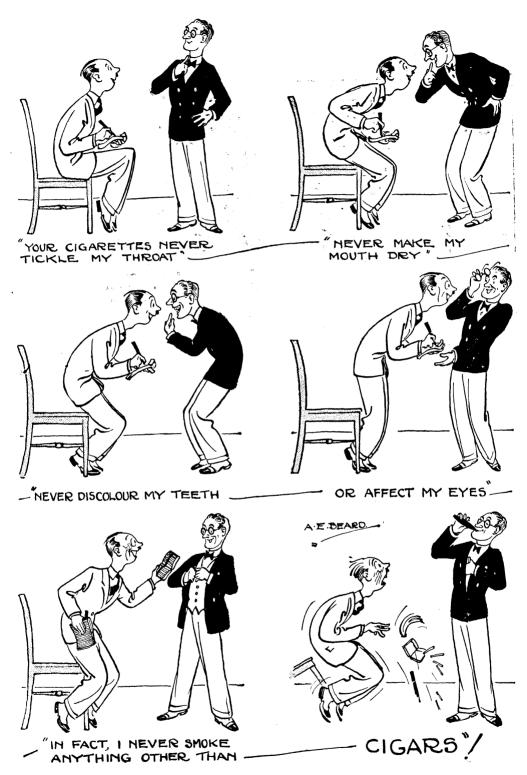
LORD DILLIPICKY OF DILLY OPEND A SIMPLE LITTLE THING LIKE A FLOWER PHOW-



- BUT ME BROWN. WHO HAS BEEN ROUND THE POLES IN A DUCK SUIT, PWAM NIAGARA IN A CAP & GOWN WHILE BLOWING A POLICE WHISTLE & WRITTEN A STANDARD WORK ON TRIPE DRESPING _____ IS QUITE UNNOTICED EATING A SCONE AND BUTTER.

DO WE MAKE TOO MUCH FUSS OF OUR LORDS AND LADIES?





THE COMEDIAN GIVES A TESTIMONIAL.





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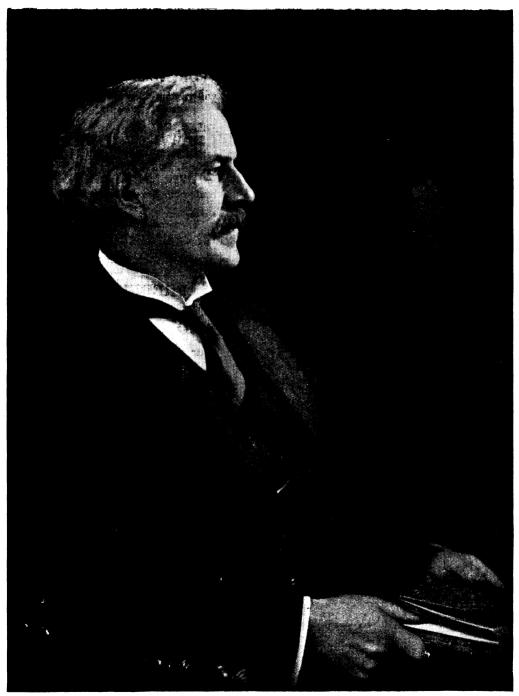
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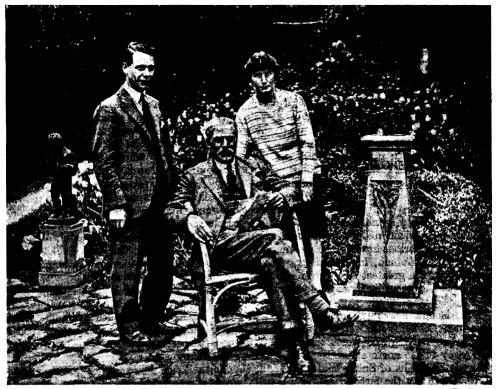
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IN THOUGHTFUL MOOD.



Topical.

THE RT. HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD AT HIS HAMPSTEAD HOME, WITH HIS SON MALCOLM AND HIS DAUGHTER ISHBEL.

J. RAMSAY MacDONALD

PRIME MINISTER

A PERSONAL STUDY

By WALTER T. ROBERTS

SOME while after the fall of the first Labour Government I sat one Sunday afternoon in Mr. MacDonald's library in his beautiful old-world house at Hampstead, talking to him about his books.

Looking at him as he stood by the window, tall, erect, stern, resolute, the broad forehead topped by a great mass of iron-grey hair, the brown eyes looking into some incalculable past or future, it was easy to understand that I was in the presence of a remarkable man who had endured and suffered.

The face in repose was careworn and tired: but at a question—quite an ordinary one about those silent friends that stood on the bookshelves—how the face and eyes lit up! The careworn features became on the instant the face of a man immensely and splendidly alive.

Of no man who has been first Minister of the Crown could it be more truthfully said that "he has had his share of sorrow and has done his share of toil" than it could be of the present Prime Minister.

All his life he has been a tireless worker

and he has had indeed his share of private

But all that he has been through, including spells of very bad health, has not affected his immense physical vitality nor for a moment lessened the strength of his vigorous intellect.

His Hampstead home is a beautiful one: surrounded by his books, pictures and old prints, Mr. MacDonald there has about him all that a man of culture could desire.

But it is not there that his heart is: his heart is in that modest home at Lossiemouth which he built years ago out of his first savings.

For the Prime Minister his Lossiemouth home has strangely mixed associations.

A life-long friend of Mr. MacDonald said to me, "It is curious how much Lossiemouth means to MacDonald, for it has been associated with the greatest sorrows in his life. Yet he would rather be there than anywhere else in the world."

Here is how Mr. MacDonald himself has described Lossiemouth. It is a fine bit of descriptive writing and worth quoting.

"Away to the north across the Firth rose the pale blue hills of Sutherland and Ross; to the south lay the fertile farms of Morayshire, sloping up through green wood and purple moorland into the blue tops of the Grampians, with the ruined palace of Spyine in the mid-distance; to the east swept the sea, bordered by a wide stretch of yellow sand bending away into the horizon, with hills in the background, the whole stretching out in a peaceful beauty which has won for it the name of the 'Bay of Naples'; westwards are wood and farms up to the encompassing hills."

There Mr. MacDonald built the home that is so deeply seated in his affections.

But scarcely had the building of it been completed when sorrow after sorrow began to fall upon him.

His youngest boy, David, died, and a few days later his mother died in that new home at Lossiemouth that had been especially built for her.

And then in the September following came to Mr. MacDonald the crowning sorrow of his wife's death.

There are men who, if such a succession of sorrows and bereavements had fallen on them on their entry into a new home, would most probably have got rid of it.

I am assured that no such thought entered the mind of Mr. MacDonald for a moment; and if it had he is the last man in the world

who would have permitted it to dwell there. or have allowed it to influence him in any way. Lossiemouth still remained as it remains to-day, the home where he likes most to be and where he likes best to take rest from the turmoil of public life.

But he was destined yet to suffer further trouble and sorrow at Lossiemouth.

Some years ago, when on a holiday at Lossiemouth, a servant maid who had been a number of years with the MacDonald family and to whom they were greatly devoted was drowned whilst bathing with Mr. MacDonald's daughters. Every effort was made to rescue the girl but she was drowned in the sight of her would-be rescuers.

This tragedy greatly affected Mr. Mac-Donald and for the first time in his life, for a while, he ceased to visit the home in the North that he loves so well.

But nothing could keep him from it for long. "I was born a Lossie loon and I'll die a Lossie man," he once declared. But if Mr. MacDonald's life has been darkened at times with sorrow it has had its periods of great happiness.

To the Prime Minister were granted fifteen years of married life, which were fifteen years

of complete happiness for him.

Mrs. MacDonald was the daughter of Dr. Hall Gladstone, who succeeded Faraday at the Royal Institution, and a niece of another distinguished scientist, Lord Kelvin.

Her first meeting with Mr. MacDonald was at a debate on Socialism.

From the first meeting their friendship rapidly developed. To use a hackneved phrase, but which in this case was literally true, they seemed to have been made for each other. They were married in the November of 1896.

One who knew her well said to the writer: "She was a really splendid woman, wife and mother; everyone who came into contact with her loved her. She was deeply religious and seriously minded, but she could enjoy the lighter side of life and there was plenty of joy and laughter in it for her."

In the life of Mr. MacDonald she became a profound and lasting influence. She was, perhaps, the only person who ever really understood the rather strange, enigmatical character of the man she married. Without her it is probable that Mr. MacDonald with his loneliness of disposition, which does not readily invite friendship, would have become an embittered man; but an embittered man is just what the Prime Minister is not.

memory of his wife and married life has saved him from that fate.

The MacDonalds' London home was at 3, Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was a home open to all their friends, and people from all parts of the world and of many different races met there.

For Mr. MacDonald and his wife these were indeed very happy, busy and interesting years.

After his wife's death, Mr. MacDonald wrote her life story. It was printed for private circulation, but at the request of many the beautifully written story of Margaret Ethel MacDonald was circulated more widely. One of the most intimate chapters in the book is one entitled "Herself."

Here is how Mr. MacDonald described his wife.

"There was a rugged, democratic texture in her friendship which gave it its peculiar strength. If she won the affection of so many with whom she came into contact, she used no cheap arts to that end—no art of address, no art of patronage, no art of joviality, no art of decoration—she took to people for their qualities; she chose her friends by rapidly-moving instinct.

"She liked people or she did not and she had generally made up her mind about them at a first interview.

"She looked for sincerity in her friends and a strenuous experience of life. She felt the bond of sisterhood far more strongly with a poor working woman who had striven, than with anyone else who had not. . . .

"But in addition to the attractive serious side of her, she had a girlish gaiety about her which her friends knew so well.

"This made her love youth as she loved the spring. I remember she was very pleased at a newspaper description of her, published in a Toronto journal when she was there attending the meeting of the British Association in 1897.

"I found it among her papers. Part of it runs: 'One of the bright young ladies among our guests is Mrs. J. R. MacDonald, a niece of Lord Kelvin.

"'Gowned in a simple Dresden silk and garden hat with her pretty colour and soft young face, she looks a veritable child."

"She lived most truly when the day's work was done, when the world was shut out and the lamps were lit and when I was at home.

There she sat sewing and darning in the narrow circumference of light, whilst I

read from some book or other, generally far removed in its thought from our everyday work.

"She loved the long, dark nights and sat, before the lamps were lit, watching the shadow movements on the walls of the room made by the lights of the Fields below, and the black sky above with the glare from the streets reflected on the clouds. She liked to be silent then; then she opened her mind to the Spirit of Life."

The death of Mrs. MacDonald ended a distinct period in Mr. MacDonald's life. It did not stop him on the road that he believed it to be his duty to tread, or perhaps his destiny, but he trod it thereafter, alone.

Never can a man have felt more alone than did Mr. MacDonald between 1914 and 1922, when he was the most abused and most hated man in England.

For eight years, on account of his opinions concerning the war, he faced such a storm of abuse as few public men in England have ever done.

Roughly speaking, his attitude towards the war was this:

War is a bad thing. The diplomacy that has led us into this war must have been bad. No good can come out of war. Now that we are in it we must go through with it. But I say that war is a bad and stupid way of settling any dispute.

Had Mr. MacDonald shifted his ground but a little, compromised with his conscience enough to enable him to enter the War Cabinet, he would have saved himself the unpleasant distinction of being the most vilified man in England for nearly eight years.

But he would not budge one inch from the position he took up on the outbreak of war. He resigned his leadership of the Labour Party and refused Cabinet office.

One likens him in those years to some bare, lone tree on a moorland facing the winter blast.

And for eight years he faced it, and faced it practically alone.

Someone has said of him that in those years he rose to the height of his greatness.

That may be true. I don't know. There were, it is true, other opponents of the war, but none sacrificed so much as Mr. Mac-Donald by being one.

It looked as if he were giving up the whole of his career as a public man; but it made not a jot of difference to Mr. MacDonald whether he was or not.

It was a case with him of "what I have said I have said."

He has never unsaid a word of what he said in 1914, and perhaps the best reply to what was then said of him is, that he has since been twice Prime Minister.

What manner of man Mr. MacDonald really is, even for anyone who knows him intimately (and very few do) would be a difficult thing to say.

He smokes, he likes walking, he plays golf, he is fond of reading, he is methodical and punctual, but such facts throw little light on the real character and disposition of the Prime Minister.

He is beyond all doubt one of the most enigmatical of men who has ever occupied

the position he holds.

Someone has described him as being a "man of strange contradictions," and in this description there appears to be some truth. He is a born fighter and has been engaged in strenuous political conflict for the best part of his life.

Yet never was there a more convinced and earnest pacifist. War is a thing abhorrent to him. He hates it and it would be difficult to imagine any circumstances in which he could bring himself to regard a war as justified.

And yet someone who knew him well has declared that if Mr. MacDonald had not been in politics he would have made a fine soldier!

He is a man who has a great love of books and he has a fine sense of what is good English, and what is bad, and in the ordinary way he speaks as good and correct English as the English he writes.

Yet he is capable of uttering such a sentence as "We'll stand no monkeying!"

One would imagine that a man of his philosophical character and disposition and long experience of public life would be quite above feeling the least shadow of annoyance at having a jest flung at him when speaking in the House of Commons, even if the jest was a rough-and-ready one.

If such an occurrence happened to Mr. Baldwin or Mr. Lloyd George, as, indeed, it often has, it might possibly make either look angry for the moment, although in the ordinary way it would have no more effect on

either of them than a drop of rain would have on a rock.

But it often affects Mr. MacDonald and in a way one would least expect.

It makes him look, not angry, but offended and hurt, in the way a woman might look.

The look I have seen the present Prime Minister sometimes throw at an interrupter in the House is just the kind of look a woman might throw at a man who bumped against her in the street and did not apologize.

It is this kind of littleness in a man who intellectually is head and shoulders above any man in his own party that is so surprising. It has surprised friends and foes alike.

And yet beyond question the present Prime Minister is a great man. You cannot help but feel he is when you talk to him. But he is the most puzzling of all the great men that have held the office he occupies.

No well-known man in public life has expressed fewer opinions about personal things than the present Prime Minister.

Between the public and himself few personal intimacies exist.

For example, it would be difficult to imagine the present Prime Minister establishing the posthumous fame of an author by a personal confession, as Mr. Baldwin did when he told the world how greatly the books of the late Mrs. Webb had interested him.

Nor could one possibly imagine Mr. Mac-Donald making any of those interesting little personal confessions the Prince of Wales has made from time to time in his speeches.

Mr. MacDonald for this reason has been credited with being a man who is lacking in human sympathy.

But those who know him well know that

is quite a wrong impression.

One fact about the present Prime Minister should be borne in mind; he is the only man who has held the highest office in the State who has never yet enjoyed perfect political security as other Prime Ministers have done, for a while, at all events.

If and when Mr. MacDonald does come to enjoy this security he may become better understood as a man than he is to-day.





"A most important thing is just about to happen,' Astley said; 'you are going to stand me a drink.'"

• "ASTLEY" •

THE TALE THE DOCTOR TOLD AT THE COURAGE CLUB

By LAURENCE MEYNELL

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

E had reached cigars and that wonderful '97 port which Vernons kept for special patrons before we could persuade the Doctor to start.

0

"The bravest thing I ever saw?" he reflected. "Well, I remember an act which seemed to me at the time to deserve a sort of Moral V.C. The bravest thing I ever

knew a man to do was to get drunk! Sounds queer, doesn't it? But it's true. Whenever people talk about bravery I think of Astley. At least, that's the name he went by (it wasn't his real one, of course)—Astley—never anything else, just Astley. It was—ah, the dear knows how many years ago; anyway, I was a youngster at the time, just

starting; and a whole series of complicated family and business reasons landed me out in Hoowaiho for months on end.

Hoowaiho was just what you would expect it to be: blue water lapping the toy pier; blazing sunshine; and at night, when your head almost brushed against the stars, they seemed so near, way down in a corner of the island there would always be a Creole somewhere plucking music from a native guitar and singing quietly in that mournful haunt-

ing way of theirs.

I walked all round the place the first day I was there. I saw all there was to be seen: the sand; the sun coming cruelly sharp off the District Agent's white house; the faded red sash round the fat stomach of the old sergeant of the guard; the tiny pier jutting out into that preposterously blue sea. And all round, coloured laziness; brown limbs basking in the sun, twined with green leaves and waiting, just waiting amiably for to-morrow, or the day after, or the day after

Yes, I got pretty sick my first week there; I was in the mood that if anyone had wanted a second universe built I would have taken the job on cheerfully, and I think I had one septic foot—a combination of a thorn and dirt; and one fat little rascal with collywobbles—too many bananas.

I wandered about Hoowaiho until I knew the place and everybody in it by heart, and I got sicker of it than I should have thought possible. If there had been a boat I think I should have quit in those first seven days; and yet at the end of fifteen months-when time came that I had to quit-I stayed in my cabin for the first half-day out because I don't like to be seen crying in public. Yes, it got me. Those Creoles, perfectly made they were, stretched in the sun, with their eternal smiles and their eternal Manyana, manyana, manyana to-morrow . . . to-morrow . . . to-morrow . . . and then every night that exotic darkness that came round you like a soft velvet cloak . . . you'd sit on the verandah after dinner listening; and sure enough from somewhere, it might be near or far away, a man's voice would float out in haunting dreams or husky passionate note—and when it had died away, a woman's would answer it. . . .

Yes; all that got me, as it gets everybody who comes under its spell.

Why, sometimes even now I'll stand in a London street looking at all the senseless hurry and rush and scramble of it—the merciless fight for existence; and it will all fade before my eyes, and in its place I can see long naked limbs stretched on the sand no browner than themselves . . . I can hear the laughter . . . see the heads nod in smiling acquiescence, Manyana, manyana . . . and imagine for an instant that I am back again in that easy life where the sun shines for sixteen hours a day and the only man who hasn't got plenty is the one who is too tired to stretch out his hand to take it. . . .

But Astley; the story's about him; I only wanted you to realise the sort of setting in which he was. I saw him the very first day. Just beyond the Harbour Offices (which are crowded when three people are in them) there stands Tofani's bar; and there, of course, was Astley: soft hat pulled to one side; a not immaculate white coat; trousers that, judge as leniently as one might, had obviously known much better days.

Astley leaning on his elbow, talking to the Creole girl behind Tofani's bar.

He looked at me in a tired way as I came in; and then, as though pronouncing a sort of sentence, said, "New Doctor."

I nodded and said, "Does anything ever happen in this ghastly place?"

"A most important thing is just about to happen," Astley said; "you are going to stand me a drink."

I laughed at his infernal impudence and called for drinks—the first drink I ever treated Astley to; gad, if I were to have a sovereign for every subsequent one he had off me I'd be a wealthy man. Please don't make any mistake about Astley-he was rotten. And with the worst kind of rottenness-not just plain natural bad stuff that fills the jails, but the other kind, the best) stuff gone wrong, a queer, degenerate throwback in good stock. This isn't a sob-in-thelast-line story; Astley hadn't shouldered somebody else's guilt, or gone to the bad in shielding a friend; he wasn't a saint in disguise-my faith, no; sometimes I thought him very much the other thing, and precious little disguise about it either. But I got to like the man for all that; and in a queer way, as much as he ever liked anything in Hoowaiho, he got to like me too. I had a little four-room bungalow place, away from the sea front; and sometimes, when he was very sure of not meeting any other European there, Astley would come and sit with me But not often; mostly I in the evening. saw him in Tofani's or-when he had overdrawn his credit there to a greater extent

than usual—just lolling on the front. It was a mystery to everybody how he lived—at least it would have been a mystery in any other climate; but there, in Hoowaiho, it was too hot to worry about other people's affairs, and the strangest odds and ends drifted about unquestioned. A man lived; and so long as he refrained from murder and stealing no one bothered much about him. You never asked a man why he came to Hoowaiho.

But Astley was beginning to interest me even in those early days, and I came to the conclusion that he got some sort of allowance from home about every third steamer—that is every third month: we had one toy steamer a month fussing about in its ridiculously important way, with its black smoke and its uniformed officials and the mails and, very rarely, a passenger. Of course we all turned out to see it arrive, it was a sort of recognised social event; and we were all dead nuts on the mails.

But I think—in our hearts—we were all relieved when it went again; I know I was. It struck such an urgent and alien note in a place where nothing mattered until tomorrow, and probably not until the day after that.

I found out that I was right about Astley's allowance. He as good as told me so on one of his rare visits to my bungalow. He was drunk at the time. "Hush money," he said, showing me an envelope and some notes (no letter) which had reached him by the mail that morning, "just to keep the black sheep where he is, instead of turning up and spoiling a nice refined family circle."

Most often I saw Astley leaning over the bar at Tofani's, talking to the Creole girl and cadging drinks from anybody—half-castes even-who would stand them for the fun of seeing how many he could take. But nobody ever found out. And with it all, the man carried something of an air, undeniably he The dear only knows how long it was since his clothes had come from a decent tailor's, but they still had a suggestion of cut about them, a sort of ragged rakishness that no amount of sleeping in them seemed to dispel altogether. And somehow, in spite of all his rottenness, the man managed to maintain something of that you-be-damned air proper to his breeding. It was an education to see him meet the District Agent every morning. The meeting formed one of the recognised events of the day at Hoowaiho, one of those things by which we told the time. Just after eleven Astley would slip

off the high stool at Tofani's-where he had been since about nine-and take his "constitutional." He was very keen on that constitutional; he left Tofani's and actually walked the full length of Hoowaiho front, right as far as the old stump that used to be the flogging-post in the bad slave days; there he turned, halted for a minute to inspect the sea with a condescending tolerance, and then began his more hurried return journey to Tofani's. At eleven precisely every morning-being a man of meticulous punctuality—the District Agent left his white house, returned the salute of the fat sergeant of the guard, and walked briskly towards the Harbour Offices. way there it was a common occurrence for him to meet Astley. Two Englishmen meeting in a place where the white population was not above three dozen at the most. Perhaps you hadn't realised how far from white Astley's coat was until you saw it up against the D.A.'s newly cleaned and pressed ducks. Astley would nod and give a casual "Mornin', Rollo" as they passed. District Agent Sir Theobald Rollo, C.B.E., would make stiff acknowledgment of the greeting, not because he liked Astley-he hated him-but because he thought that out there, before the natives, no Englishman should cut another.

One evening at my bungalow, I caught him just for half an instant off his guard, a thing rare with Astley. He was standing looking at an illustrated weekly, and he was so interested in it that he didn't hear me come into the room. I knew what the paper was—a seven-months-old "Illustrated" but there was something in Astley's face which made me mighty curious to see just what part of it he was staring at. I tiptoed up and looked over his shoulder. Lord, he jumped a foot; the man's nerves were all to pieces. He recovered himself and turned over the page easily enough, but I had seen what had put the ghosts behind his eyes nothing but a picture of two girls in hunting kit. Hunting—I had almost forgotten that mornings could be sharp and frosty, horses and hounds keen, the whole of life eager, with an edge on it. . . .

So, I reckon, had Astley; for he stayed with me longer than was his custom and was even more brooding and uncommunicative than ever. At last he whipped out a queer question. "How long do you think I'll live, Westman?" he asked, the whisky tumbler half-way to his mouth.

I was younger then, with the callousness

of youth. "Faith," I told him, "your sort seem to last for ever, Astley." The cynicism of the answer tickled his fancy; he tossed off his drink and all he said was, "So Hell is eternal, after all."

That evening I walked back with him to his place, partly because it was too hot to think of going to sleep and partly because as soon as I suggested coming I could see that he didn't want me to, and I was inquisitive enough to wonder why. He let me walk back with him, but take me inside he would not (thereby committing the gravest of sins in a land where hospitality is the first virtue of all). No; he halted me at the foot of the path to his bungalow and said "Good night"—flat and uncompromis-So good night it was. And a minute later, when I looked over my shoulder, I saw why—the mosquito netting at his doorway had been moved to one side and someone stood there to welcome him. The light from a reading-lamp inside showed her to me; I could see her dark hair and her passionate southern eyes gleaming; it was the Creole girl from the Bar at Tofani's. So I turned and walked miserably away—a bad business, thought I unhappily, remembering that there was one sin in those parts more unforgivable even than lack of hospitality . . . a bad business.

I guessed there was something up when I looked out of my window next morning and saw the fat sergeant at the D.A.'s gate with a flaming new red sash round his middle; but I couldn't guess that it was going to concern me until the D.A. himself appeared long before his usual time and came briskly over towards my place. However informal a place may be, the D.A., after all, is the D.A., and one likes to be a little shipshape to receive him. But calls before breakfast were unexpected in Hoowaiho, and I was in my pyjamas, hadn't even had a tub, when he turned up spick-and-span as a guardsman.

"Good morning, Sir Theobald," I said.
"Anything I can do for you?" I could read disapproval of my pyjamas and tousled hair in his eyes, but he was too perturbed by the yellow marconigram he kept waving about to think of anything but what he had to tell me.

"Devil of a stew," he started off, "very devil of a stew. I suppose you can do appendicitis? I mean you've got the scissors and knives and things, eh?"

I reassured him on that point and began

to take more interest. "Who's talking about appendicitis?" I asked.

The marconigram flapped like some Chinese bird in front of me. "Why, hang it, Westman, the Governor-General has; the new one on his way out from England. Hang it all, you'd think a man could wait till he reaches his job before starting to play the fool with his inside."

I wanted to know how I came into it. "He's on his way to Honos and they haven't a ship's doctor on board; we're the nearest station with a medico, so they're putting in here at about noon to-day" (the poor agitated D.A. fanned me with the marconigram); "a Governor-General hasn't called at Hoowaiho for a dozen years or more. Why on earth can't the man have appendicitis comfortably at home? I simply don't know what to do with a Governor-General—the salute, for instance—half my fellows have never fired a rifle in their lives."

"Your Sergeant's got a new sash," I

pointed out hopefully.

"Anyway," the D.A. said with a certain amount of malicious satisfaction, "they can't land him at noon 'cause of the tide; they've got to wait till three; just shows what a lot they know about things. Look here, Westman, you'll clean up your knives and pins and things, won't you? and I must hurry back and see about getting a room ready. Don't forget he's Government property and they'll probably want reasons in triplicate if you kill him."

As you fellows can guess, I was mighty pleased and mighty nervous all at once; it was my first appendicitis since qualifying, and as far as I could see I wasn't going to get any trained help in it; on the other hand, if I could make a good job of a Governor-General it would be an excellent start, especially as the said G.G. was a Lord. learned this from Rollo, for naturally I drifted over to his house to find out all I could, and he chucked me scraps of information as he dashed about in a frenzy of preparation. Rollo was a perfect specimen of the domesticated bachelor, and anything that upset the meticulous precision of his household was anothema to him. He had an elaborate system of storing away every single object in some particular place; which, if only he could have remembered the places sacrosanct to individual things, would have infallibly excluded the possibility of anything ever being lost. Unfortunately he couldn't; so the whole staff of the D.A.'s

house spent a good hour that morning hunting for "Personages; reception of, procedure regarding." Poor Rollo was worried to death about the proper size of the Jack to be flown and as to whether the band played only the first two bars of "the King" or the whole verse. In the end I left him worrying about it—it seemed to me Lord Collin would be more interested in my operating table (which was the one out of the D.A.'s kitchen) than in the musical reception he got.

Of course, in five minutes the whole of Hoowaiho knew what was afoot and by three o'clock that afternoon the entire

population was out on the front.

Rollo had a word for my private ear towards midday. "That fellow Astley," he said, drawing me on one side in his best Colonial Administration manner, "you seem to be able to do more with him than anybody else can, Westman; can you arrange—would it be possible?—well, we stick together as white men and all that, of course, but frankly we do not want the Governor-General's first sight in Hoowaiho to be a roaring drunk Englishman, do we? Gives a baddish tone to the place, don't you agree?"

I did agree, and solemnly said I would do my best to preserve the tone of Hoowaiho. And everything turned out all right, because when the G.G. landed poor Astley was nowhere to be seen—he was lying on the floor of Tofani's bar, which was deserted except for his unconscious self.

We hurried Lord Collin up to the D.A.'s house, and I could see that he had come none too soon. I operated straightway and found that he could not have afforded to

wait many more hours.

Collin himself didn't amount to much, a tubby, fussy little man inclined to baldness; it was his wife who made it worth while doing my best for him. It was she who had diagnosed appendicitis in the first case; she who had forced him to suspend the official programme and put in to Hoowaiho; she, and only she, who was the slightest help to me in the operation. She kept her mouth shut, did what she was told, and didn't scream when she saw blood. If she hadn't been so good-looking she would have made a first-rate nurse; I had a fancy that I had seen her before somewhere, but I was too busy with Collin's inside to think much about her

Everything went as well as could be, and in the evening I was sitting smoking the

cigar of self-satisfaction when Astley turned up. In the excitement of the afternoon I had forgotten all about the man. He looked ill, worse than usual (as well he might); but he was as off-hand and independent as ever.

"Hear you've been appointed Consulting Physician to the Court, or something near it," he half sneered, "whilst I—I had my siesta."

I nodded and laughed; I didn't mind his half-sneers.

"That's right," I said; and then rapped out, "No, you don't." He drew his stretched-out shaking hand back from the decanter and looked up in surprise. "Not to-night," I said; "you've had enough, Astley."

"Well, that's poor hospitality," he said.

"It may be poor hospitality," I allowed,
"but it's good medicine. You're just about
as near D.T.'s as a man can be without
actually having them. It isn't a doctor's
place to preach, but it isn't his place to help
a man kill himself either."

"Very much on our dignity, after cutting some damned lord about," Astley sneered. It wasn't worth while quarrelling with the man, so I just crossed the room to open the door and show him the way out.

I opened it, and someone was on the doorstep.

"Hallo, Lady Collin," I said, "nothing

gone wrong, I hope?"

"No; everything is perfectly all right," she answered, laughing, "but I just wanted to ask you—" Then something froze her gay voice and scared all the jollity out of her lovely eyes; she was staring over my shoulder into the room behind me. I turned to see what she was looking at; the man we all called Astley stood there, his jaw dropped, his face as white as marble. Very slowly he began to cross the room towards her; I watched him as he came nearer, and, my faith, but there were the torments of the damned in that poor devil's eves.

Lady Collin only said one word and that was in a whisper. "Dickie," she said.

Astley didn't answer at all; he shrugged his shoulders; of habit the scornful smile tried to twist the corners of his mouth; he inclined his head; it was as much as to say, "Yes—Dickie. What other circumstances would you expect to find me in, and what do you propose to do about it?"

Nobody seemed to be taking much notice of me, so I slipped past Lady Collin out of the bungalow and closed the door quietly behind me.

I had seen her before, of course, or at any rate her photograph—in a seven-months'-old illustrated paper.

I didn't see Astley again for three days; for one thing, I was pretty busy with Collin, who didn't go on quite as well at first as I wanted him to; and for another, I couldn't get hold of the man. Twice I looked in at Tofani's bar and each time the Creole told me that she hadn't seen him. Well, if she hadn't seen him—as I reasonably asked myself—who had? Then on the third day he turned up at my place looking pretty bad.

"Have a whisky and soda," I said, for he looked as though he wanted it.

He shook his head (the first time I had ever known him refuse a drink). "No, thanks," he said as casually as he could, "I'm off it for a bit."

"Well, miracles will never cease," I said lightly, hiding the decanter away in a cupboard, for I knew what the sight of the stuff is to a man when he first tries to break himself of it.

"Miracles," he half groaned, "you're right, Westman; devilish miracles, too, some of 'em."

I thought the whole story was coming out then and, being human, I was itching to hear it; but he stopped short and did no more than sit there for an hour or so talking on every subject he could lay his tongue to, but never mentioning the one thing he wanted to say. And half a question from me was enough to send him scarlet-faced out of the bungalow.

What the man did with himself for the next fortnight or so I don't know. He shunned Tofani's bar, and the girl in it, like the plague; and only very occasionally did he come to see me. Mostly I think he was walking like a maniac over that blazing countryside, in the black pit at Ephesus that every man knows who has tried to fight against the beasts that are stronger than himself.

Whether he saw Lady Collin or not I don't know. I saw her, of course, every day. As soon as Collin could sit up we used to play bridge with him; myself, Rollo, Collin and that surprising wife of his. I like bridge—but not Collin's sort. He'd pull a card out and snuff and hum and ha over it for five minutes, then put it back and start all over again. Suspension Bridge, I called it, and darned exasperating it was.

But Lady Collin never got exasperated; at least she didn't show it. She always had a quick joke or some pleasant little idiocy to smooth over an awkward moment, and all the time she played a thundering good hand -rooked me of about twenty-five bob, I remember. A ready tongue she had, but never a word about Astley, not even to me. She had a secret and she kept it—I came to respect that woman more and more; yet all the time I couldn't help turning the problem over and over in my mind. Where had she and Astley met; what had they been to one another; how did she come to marry the fussy little martinet Collin; and what did she think of Astley now? Those were the things I couldn't help wondering about in those long exotic nights when heat made sleep impossible, and the only sound was the purring wash of the long Atlantic rollers on the beach.

It came out in the end. Someone had the bright idea of running a dance (the first in Hoowaiho, I should think) to celebrate the G.G.'s recovery. Lady Collin had come over to talk about the arrangements. Rollo left it all to her, she had him weighed up all right—and then at the end she slipped out the innocent-looking question:

"I suppose all the white people in Hoo-

waiho will be invited?"

"I suppose so," I agreed, before I had quite time enough to see below the surface of the harmless query.

" All ? "

"Well—" I hedged. She nodded, cutting me short.

"Exactly; there are difficulties, aren't

there?"

"One difficulty, Lady Collin," I admitted.
"Doctor," she said after a few seconds' silence, "tell me, do men ever go to the bad past all hope of redemption—can a man get so low down that nothing can bring him to decency again?"

"Some men take things worse than

others, Lady Collin."

"Some men are born worse than others," she took me up quickly: "but is a man ever born wholly bad?"

Now, if anybody else had asked me that question I might have told them that they wouldn't have to go very far for an example; but, with that girl standing there in the light of my reading-lamp, the lovely eyes shining and steady in the serious lovelier face, it was impossible to believe in the existence of anything altogether bad. I threw out a smokescreen of optimistic platitudes. There were



"I turned to see what she was looking at; the man we all called Astley stood there, his jaw dropped, his face as white as marble."

few men, if any, so far gone down the social scale (I said) that nothing could be done for them. I said that every man, however far downhill he had slipped, must have some spot in him that could be appealed to. I said—but she cut me short again. She was like that—abrupt, especially when one was going to say something foolish. She sat down and asked for a cigarette and five minutes of my time.

I gave her three cigarettes and half an hour, and in return she told me things. When she had gone I tried to sort them out.

Astley came of a most distinguished family (it seemed); his father was a great gentleman, a Sahib; but Astley (Dickie, she called him) had never shown anything but an extraordinary capacity for playing rotter. And yet, she argued, he must at one time have displayed something else, or why should she have fallen in love with him? Yes; she had loved him. Loved the queer streak of true metal that was mixed up with all the twisted rottenness of the man, just as occasionally a hint of breeding touched his dissipated features. Loved him, she said, and tried to help him. Help him? My faith, but that girl must have stripped her soul of every rag of pride to try to get the man she loved towards even the outskirts of decency. He had a pretty formidable array of tricks to break her courage for herwine, and other women, debts (not scrupling to borrow from her), rumours of cheating at cards, nasty whispers about cheques; and, as a final argument, theft. Yes, he actually stole some jewellery from the girl who alone was doing what everybody else in the wide world had long since given up, sticking to The theft had been discovered (be sure by no encouragement of hers) and things were taken out of her hands. Eventually Astley stood in the dock, and as damning a record as was ever charged to any man was read out against him. He deserved prison and got it. And that was the end; after prison he went to the bad completely and in a little time left the country-she did not know where he had gone to and had never thought to see him again. She had loved

"And now," I suggested after a goodish silence, "things are different?"

She took my meaning quickly enough. "I am perfectly happy with Francis," she said; "he has been a very good husband to me."

I nodded: after all, it wasn't my business to ask what in the wide world had persuaded her to marry that self-satisfied little piece of righteous pomposity—there are such things as emotional reactions, spiritual rebounds; even such things as parents who can see nothing more attractive than the glitter of a title. . . . She cut short my musings by jumping up and making for the door.

"I think, after all," she said by way of farewell, "that all the white people had

better be asked, don't you?"

I nodded.

So all the white people were asked; and, contrary to my expectation, they all came.

After what I had been told I hardly thought that Astley would have the nerve to turn up and face the girl whose heart he had done his best to break.

But he had, of course; the Astleys of life have nerve enough for anything; and what's more, he turned up looking really smart, the one and only time in my life I saw the man well dressed. Collin was there, sitting in an arm-chair, nursing his protuberant little tummy-very much the Important Personage. It was delicious comedy-no, nearer tragedy, I think, to watch Astley being introduced to him. Collin, of course, had no idea who he was; and they confronted one another: the unathletic beaming moralist, like a tubby little god; the lean sardonic sinner, still touched with hints of breeding; and between them the woman who had loved one and married the other.

Astley danced a good deal with Lady Collin—it's a curious fact, but dancing nearly always is one of the Black Sheep's accomplishments; have you noticed that?—and they must have sat out a fair amount together. I know I only ran up against the man once during the evening; it was at the bar, and, faith, any man might well want a drink dancing in that climate. I got next to Astley by accident; he was drinking a long lemonade!

The dance was held two days before the G.G. left Hoowaiho, so the day after it I didn't see much of Lady Collin; she was busy packing, I expect; she had the sort of husband who wouldn't go to Brighton without taking a trunk and a couple of suitcases.

But I did see Astley. He came in the morning after the dance, earlier than I had ever known him be about before. Just out of curiosity I offered him a drink; he refused it. He started off with a queer question: "You've had a fair amount of experience as a doctor, one way or another, Westman?"

I hadn't; but no doctor ever admits that, so I affected modesty. "Well, tell me, have you ever seen a man so hopelessly ill-bad. that he is past trying for, past help?" Before I could answer he shot off on another "Mavis has had a pretty long talk with you, hasn't she?"

"Mavis?" I queried.

Astley's lips curled in scorn. "I forgot: Lady Collin, the devoted wife of His Excelcellency the Governor-General-in humbler days I knew her as Mavis; I think she told you pretty well all there is to know about me, didn't she?"

"In confidence, yes."

"Confidence—that's good, that is. always thought I was a rotter; and now, in confidence, you know I am a jail-bird-"Look here, Astley-" I began.

"Oh, it's all right; don't think I mind; when all the world at home knows, why should I mind another person knowing? I've never seen you before; in a few months' time, when you leave this ghastly place, I shall never see you again; so what odds is And anyway, you are the one white man in Hoowaiho; the others are too damned stuck up to open their doors for half an hour to an out-and-outer like myself; no

forget your decency to me, Doctor." I began the usual self-depreciatory remarks; but Astley didn't care much for

sport like the good old English one of kicking

a man when he's down; don't think I shall

what I had to say that morning.

"Westman," he said, cutting in on me, "she wants me to go back with her; to go

back to England and make good."

I looked across the table at that white face with its blazing eyes and at the twitching fingers, never still for an instant, and the thought that came first into my head was, "Faith, my man, but you ought to be in a nursing home."

There was no stopping Astley that morning; he talked more than I had ever known him to before; in the end I knew pretty well all that had passed between him and Mavis Collin when they sat out together in the long

intervals of the night before.

"Look here, Westman, I want you to get it right. Mavis isn't proposing that I should run away with her. She's too white for that; she is married to a man and she's that man's wife, come what may—just as one always knew she would be. Besides, she doesn't love me any more; she told me so. And God knows I don't wonder at it. No; she doesn't love me; but she can't bear to

see me living like an animal. Her words. Westman. So she offered to take me with her and Collin to Honos; and, when they go back in the spring, to take me with them to England. England-gad, I might be hunting again next season---!"

She offered?" I asked.

"You don't think I would have face enough to ask, do you? Or perhaps by now you think I'd have the face to do anything-and I suppose you, and all the other sanctimonious people, think you are right. Well, just to show you you're not, let me tell you I'm not going."

"Not going?"

"No. Makes you stare, doesn't it? You think anything would be good enough for an outsider like me to snatch at, and I ought to be grateful for the chance of doing Well, you're wrong. Don't you think I know what it would be like if I took Mavis at her word, and went with her and that little motor-mascot of a husband of hers? Don't you think I can see how carefully the whisky would be locked up, how the butler would be told to miss my glass after the first round of wine, how religiously Collin would hide his valuables away every evening, 'so as not to put temptation in my way '-don't you think I can see all that? Why, it would be like living in a Borstal Institute, man. Thanks, I'd sooner live what Mavis called the life of an animal here than that. Hypocrisy may——"

I think I threw something at him to stop him; I know I was angry. "Shut up, Astley," I cried. "I've let everything else in your rotten life go by without protest, but I'm hanged if you're going to say one word about Lady Collin. I'm not going to talk about what she has been to you in the past—though I've a pretty shrewd idea of what you were to her; but I am going to say that, whether you accept her offer or not, you are not going to say one word against her, at least not to me-"

"You think I'm ungrateful—that I ought

to go with her?"

Me? Lord, no. If I were given the choice between Tofani's bar and the country houses of England, I should naturally plump for Tofani's bar every time. I should choose to stay out here, unshaved, dirty, ill-dressed, rather than take a chance to re-establish myself among decent people again-"

"Yes, but---"

"With someone first cousin to an Angel to help me."

"But, Doctor—it's easy to talk—but can

a man ever get over that?" He jerked his thumb towards the cupboard, wherein, of old, he knew my decanter stood.
"A man can," I said, meaning to hurt him

I put my two hands on the man's shoulders and forced him to face me. "Look here, Astley," I said, "there isn't a pit in hell deep enough but a woman, if she wants to, can



"She didn't say anything more, she didn't touch him, she just looked—there was Astley's answer plain to see.'

and glad to see the flickering of resentment in those tired eyes.

"And—and the other things?" $_{
m he}$ whispered.

pull a man out of it. If a woman had done for me what Mavis Collin has done for you; and if at the end of it all she found me a thousand times lower than you are now, and



held out her hand, and smiled, and said, 'Come'-d'you think I shouldn't know what to do? Why, man, I'd go on my knees and kiss the very ground she trod on."

"Yes—but," Astley began weakly, and I turned to get my fishing-tackle out of a corner; it always makes me uncomfortable

to see a man crying.
"I'm going fishing," I told him; "I shan't be back before evening."

"Mavis is coming here at six," he whispered, "for-for my answer. I told her to meet me here, the only place I have that I'm not ashamed of—you didn't mind?"

"I don't mind," I said, "if only you'll give her the right answer."

Astley nodded. "Thanks, Westman, you're a sport. I can sit here and think it out a bit?"

"Sit here till Doomsday," I said, lifting my tackle and striding out into the sunlight.

My pool was half the island away, and by the time I got there the midday heat had begun, so I sat down and promptly went to sleep; after all, as I reflected, if I didn't fish that day there was always the day after -manyana, and manyana, and manyana. It was three in the afternoon before I did any fishing; and then, if you understand me, it was more thinking than fishing.

Somehow, when I awoke and looked back on them, the events of the morning took on a very different aspect. It was all very well for me to go mixing myself up in other people's affairs by giving them advice-but did I know enough about the people and matters concerned to do it? Or rather, didn't I know too much? Hadn't I seen enough of Astley, and heard enough too, to know that at heart he was bad; that right down at the innermost core that is a man's soul he was rotten? A woman who loves a man will see a halo round him long after his last friends have reluctantly acknowledged the feet of clay; and perhaps she will never admit that there is nothing good in him. Here, in Hoowaiho, it was one thing for Mavis Collin to talk of "looking after" the man. But what would happen, I suddenly wondered, when he was back in England again, with his feet set once more in the pleasant ways of social decency, living in the same house as Mavis Collin and her husband; seeing every day that proudly carried beauty, those eyes that once meant so much to him? When there were horse-races and cards and wine all about him? And other women? What would happen, I wondered, if in the desperate fight which he would have to make the poor devil slipped once-just one little slip? How far crashing down the ladder would it take him, and whom else beside? I suddenly saw a little cameo of the future: I saw a lighted comfortable English drawing-room; by a roaring fire I saw little tubby Collin settling down for a comfortable evening's read; I saw his beautiful wife fussing about him, seeing to his wants; and somewhere in the background I saw in evening clothes the handsome figure of the half-reformed rake waiting to take her out. And I knew that it wouldn't be fair, not to any of them. Not to Collin (but he didn't matter much); not to Astley (he deserved all he got); not to her, and she had suffered enough already from her devotion to a man who was not worthy to black her shoes.

The thing was on me so strongly that I jumped up and left my fishing to hurry (to hurry—in Hoowaiho!) back. I must get there before she does, I thought, and have it out with Astley. Go? Of course he'll go; a man like that never has the courage to deny himself anything—and to deny himself this would need supreme courage. After all, he has done some pretty beastly things in

life (I thought); and, although it won't be pleasant for either of us, I shall be brutally frank to him. The leopard can't change his spots; and Astley has touched too much pitch for him to get clean now. More and more clearly I saw that if he went back it would be not so much to save himself as to ruin others. And, of course, he would (if I let him) take the wonderful offer. Who in all the wide world would not? I could imagine him sitting all the day long in my bungalow thinking with most agonising clarity of the things he had lost, the things he now could get back to. And, I can tell you, memory plagues you pretty sharply in those far-off parts. The traffic hooting up Ludgate Hill was never such a sweet sound as in the dreary silence of some God-forsaken spot; a man's mouth will go dry at times thinking of taking some fresh-scented English girl to dance at the Ritz, when all he has around him for miles is salt water and sunbaked sand.

Yes; I could pretty well guess what Astley's answer would be; and I had no doubt that he would make it in perfectly good faith. No man can make resolutions sound so convincing as the one who has constant practice at it. It wasn't the first three months in England that I feared, it was afterwards; and it wasn't for him that I was afraid, it was for Her.

I must have miscalculated the time, or else, in her anxiety to have her answer, Lady Collin was early; for I ran into her literally on my doorstep.

"Doctor Westman," she said, "I arranged to meet a—a friend here——"

I nodded. "I know all about it," I said; "I'll just go in and see if he has turned up." She must have thought it devilish rude of me, for I pushed right in front of her into the house and left her standing outside; you see, I wanted to get hold of Astley and just din two words into his head: "YOU CAN'T."

I got hold of him all right—he wasn't in any condition to run away. Just at first I thought he had had the spirit to end it all cleanly and decently—but no, it wasn't that. The open corner cupboard, the empty bottle, Astley sagging in an attitude in which I had seen him too, too often—they all told an unmistakable tale. Then my eyes were caught by a note on the table, neatly folded and addressed in shaky hand-writing to myself. I opened and read it.

"When she asks me I shall never have the strength to say 'no'—but it's no good, Doc, I can't run straight; suppose it's the way I'm made or something—this seemed the most convincing answer of all to give."

I read it twice and then made a mental apology to the man who had written it.

"May I come in?"... I stuffed the note away in my pocket—I reckoned it was up to me to play Astley's hand for him.
"Oh yes, come along in," I sang out.

The girl came in. "That's his answer," I said, with a nod of my head towards the scene that didn't want any explanation. I don't think it was the first time that she had seen him like that either. She stood staring at him and presently she whispered, "That's—his—answer."

She crossed the room and stood over him; and even then—though I don't know how women do it—but even then I don't believe she hated him. "Dickie, Dickie," she suddenly cried, and, my faith, there was enough bitterness in her voice to whip dead men alive, "why did you do it? Why could you never think of anybody but yourself—your worst self?"

She didn't say anything more, she didn't touch him, she just looked—there was Astley's answer plain to see. After a while she turned and left the room; not a word to me; not a glance right or left; I think she was crying.

Maybe five, maybe ten minutes later Sir Theobald Rollo hurried in. "Look here, Westman," he started off, "we're in the devil of a stew, very devil of a stew. I suppose you haven't any idea whether we give the G.G. the same salute on departure as arrival? Someone has lost that darned book again; personally I'm inclined-" Then he caught sight of something over my shoulder and stopped. He took a step round me to get a clearer view, then he "I say," he said, "that's a pretty bad advertisement, isn't it? Devilish bad. what? I mean, if the G.G. or Lady Collin sees a thing like that, it lets us down all round, doesn't it? A wrong 'un, Astley; never done one decent thing in his life-"

"Excuse me, Rollo," I said, "but Astley's my guest, in my house now. And, anyway, you're wrong about him; he has done one decent thing in his life, one supremely decent thing."

GOD'S COINAGE.

GOLD He giveth, scattered open-handed;
Not the burning gold
With which men's happiness is bought and sold,
By whose searing touch their souls are branded;
But the gold of broom,
Rich sunsets, golden-rod, and barley-plume.

Silver hath He, measure never stinted;
Not the sparing piece
Of hard-won ore, the poor man's scant increase,
Sparsely meted, though in plenty minted;
But the silver stream,
Dove's feathers, silver birch, and minnow's gleam.

Copper strews He, His full coffers sharing;
Not the meagre coin
In search of which the child and pauper join,
One, expectant, one long since despairing,
But the copper trees,
Soil, fir cones, russet apples, brown-ringed bees.

DOROTHY M. PAYNE.

AUNT JUDY

By FREDERICK WATSON

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT HOLIDAY, R.I.

▼ EORGE FANSHAW watched his man Wagstowe enter the bedroom and, according to the custom of many years, lay his little tray of morning tea with his letters on the table beside him. He also continued, having no intellectual stimulus at the time, to observe Wagstowe draw the curtains and let in the moderate sunlight which an upper service flat in St. James's Street permits without any additional sub-clause in the lease. Regarding his faithful attendant with half-open eyes, George was shocked with his tendency to a figure. It had never occurred to him before. One had not connected maturity with Wagstowe. He had given the idea of a light weight, which was right and proper. One did not want a breathless valet with a aside contour. Putting humanitarian claims, it did away with all the beauties of a discreet and noiseless service. There seemed also a faint indication of desolation under Wagstowe's hair. As though something were lying doggo. Bald? would be too much. It was the next stage to a beard like that of the butler at Aunt Judith's.

"I hope you are a little easier, sir."

George did not reply for a moment. Was he easier? It is so difficult to tell until one gets up. Even then one may feel comparatively cheerful until one has breakfast. After which there is a very dark hour compared with which the chatter of poetical people about the silent watches of the night, the breaking of the dawn, and so forth, are merely hot air.

But the question of his health had not failed to fascinate George for some years.

It is needless to remark that George enjoyed independent means, the fact being that, by some mysterious dispensation of Providence, his Aunt Judith was compelled to maintain him under the terms of his grandfather's will. That Aunt Judith was in the habit of writing him an occasional snorter could not be helped. That was her

perquisite. She had even once visited him. It had been a very dramatic interview indeed. In bed at 11 a.m. George was hardly the equal of Aunt Judith, who had said what she believed to be true about both her nephew and Wagstowe. Her words had cut deep. It had taken a trip to the Canaries—on Aunt Judith's allowance—to soothe the savage tang of her insults. After which George had ignored Aunt Judith. People begged him to remember she was quite a character. He replied quite truly that characters are only amusing in books.

As Aunt Judith had never been ill, or apparently grown any older during the last fifty years, it came as a distinct jar to George when Wagstowe broke the sad tidings. It had not crossed his mind that any woman as near macadam as Aunt Judith could die except in the most gradual and reluctant stages. He had, in fact, always intended one day or another to have a tender reconciliation with Aunt Judith. He pictured it at Brighton in Bath chairs.

"It is possible," said Wagstowe with the absolute discretion of pure knowledge, "there may be a note amongst your cor-

respondence."

There was. A letter from Messrs. Eldritch, Eldritch & Scone. It begged Mr. Fanshaw to make a point of blowing in upon them on a matter of urgent business arising from the lamentable decease of Miss Judith MacCorquodale.

"Poor Aunt Judy," murmured George,

still quiescent.

He was aware that Wagstowe was watching him. The mind of Wagstowe had travelled further. He was a thoughtful man and he hated change. Gradually George realised that as Aunt Judith was his only relative he was presumably her heir. He stirred his tea plaintively. He would be well off. Dear me. Poor Aunt Judy. He knew suddenly the long sad thoughts of people who wish they had been nicer. There was, as a matter of fact, no

call for idle regrets. Aunt Judy would have preferred not.

"Dark clothes, Wagstowe," he said,

muting his voice.

"I quite understand, sir," said Wagstowe, selecting an undertaker's tie.

"I have to attend to some business," continued George, and added with a brave front, "connected with my Aunt Judith."

"I quite understand, sir," again remarked Wagstowe but with a disturbed and brooding eye. He had never forgotten some of the things Aunt Judith had seen fit to release. They had not the ring of a doting maiden lady.

In a state of subdued excitement George made his way to a square in the West Central. There was complete calm in the office of Eldritch, Eldritch & Scone. It faced the sunny side, it preserved the old torch extinguishers to show how it was rooted in the past, and within its immense portals it fostered a most gloomy and meditative spirit. Being a solicitors' office, this was not accidental.

In sympathy with this excellent tradition the senior partner, Edmund Eldritch, presented the appearance of a judge turned family physician. He sat surrounded by tin boxes with faded but very eminent names inscribed upon them. Under the shadow of those names anyone familiar with contemporary social history was confident that nothing could ever startle Mr. Eldritch again. In an adjoining room sat Mr. Richard, a most promising young man who shepherded the younger generation.

George had remained comparatively cheerful until he walked up the crumbling stairway and passed into an extremely silent and fusty waiting-room full of gigantic tomes heavily bound in faded gold and rus-The dirty window gave him a complete command of a small and dingy area where a typically town cat crouched upon a dustbin. As George sat there he wished he had been kinder to poor Aunt Judy who had been-after all-his only and his last relation. He hoped he would be able to enjoy any little remembrance he inherited without remorse. After all, dear Aunt Judy had been very eccentric. But there it was. What should he do? should he go?

In the best solicitors' offices the partners look over their spectacles at the clerk who announces that a client has arrived, and then without haste or any human emotion whatever write several letters about the garden or a pipe of port, or a new mashie. It is notorious that clients segregated alone in a room like the one George was in offer very little animation or resistance under consultation. They only want to go home and crawl into bed.

As George sat there he was aware of a dull ache in his right side. He had never actually traced the spot but he had suspected it. It clearly indicated a trip abroad. He had long wanted to go right away for the winter. He was certain he required the sun. Everybody was cracked about the sun nowadays. And with money—and poor Aunt Judy must have left a pile, having always been notoriously stingy—he could well afford to take things easily. He would go to Cairo—

"Mr. Fanshaw."

Yes, concluded George, and after Cairo he would take a villa at Cannes. Conventional, but then illness is unhappily about the most conventional thing in the world. Sitting there, he had a pathetic little frame-up of himself bearing up bravely on poor Aunt Judy's five thousand a year. It could hardly be less. Probably more. He recalled long, long ago someone—who was it?—had said his grandfather, a miser if ever there had been one—

"Mr. Fanshaw."

"I beg your pardon," said George with an apologetic smile, "I was thinking." He was, as a matter of fact, wondering if they would pay it quarterly—

In the appalling room where Mr. Eldritch sat supported by the tin tombstones of his clients George received a courtly welcome. Beside Mr. Eldritch stood a jug of water (with hygienic stopper) and a tumbler, apparently for emergency work when he read the terms of a will.

Mr. Eldritch studied George for a moment, and gave a little sigh. He had hoped that it would have been an easier task.

"It is my duty," he said in a voice which would have sent up the goodwill of any undertaker's establishment, "it is my duty to explain as clearly and yet as briefly as I can the last testament of your deceased Aunt, Miss Judith MacCorquodale."

George could not think of anything appropriate, so he bowed his head. He had always considered the name MacCorquodale a pity. It sounded most indecorous at such a time.

"Your dear Aunt," commenced Mr. Eldritch in his fluty voice, "was a very old client of our firm and a most remarkable

woman. Quite old-world in her ideas, her life, and her views. She will live in county history. I always said she should have written her reminiscences. When one thinks of those hounds——"

"I beg your pardon."

"Hounds. Surely you know your Aunt MacCorquodale hunted her own pack of foxhounds?"

"I did not," said George with a vague sense of doom.

"You don't say. How extremely odd. She was a legend long before she died. The stories of her. I never expect to see again such an original character. Horses, hounds, and her family pets. I shall never forget a visit I paid her. It reminded me of those eighteenth-century memoirs. Dear me—"

"Dear me," echoed George.

"And now to business," said Mr. Eldritch, with a practical note. "As you are aware, your Aunt Judith under a codicil of your grandfather's will was compelled to allow you a thousand a year during her lifetime. This sum expired at her decease. That was, of course, inevitable; in fact, simply——"At that point Mr. Eldritch threw off one of those Latin tags which conveying so little yet mean, quite evidently, so much.

Something in the tone of Mr. Eldritch's legal voice caused George to start violently. To his increasing disquietude Mr. Eldritch touched a little bell which he had for major operations of this kind, and a moment later the door opened and Mr. Richard appeared. The operating staff was now complete. Mr. Richard—as though he knew the hour of execution was nine sharp—carried a number of important-looking documents which he handed formally to Mr. Eldritch, who cleaned his spectacles and then broke into his death-chant.

"I am afraid I must prepare you for a shock, Mr. Fanshaw."

At those tear-stained words George knew he was a pauper. He realised that instead of Cairo he would be in Clapham. There was only one tragic certainty. In his state of health it could not be for long.

"Your Aunt Judith had strong views. But she had also according to her lights an equally strong sense of duty. Despite all we could say to the contrary, she failed to appreciate you. In a word, she could not refer to you with temperance. Her inclination was to cut you completely out of her will. She has often in this room expressed herself very strongly about the urgency of a more energetic mode of exis-

tence than I am informed—I speak without prejudice—you have been in the habit of leading. You will recall about two years ago we sent you at your Aunt's direction a formal remonstrance——"

"My life is my own," broke out George, deeply incensed; "in my precarious state of health I cannot bound about the country-

side."

"Your Aunt was of the opinion that you could and should. She felt very strongly about it. She could not get away from the fact that as the last of the family you differed—how shall I put it?—from your ancestors. In her last letter it was quite obvious the matter was actually preying on her mind. You will recall that she said she would not remain satisfied unless her doctor stated on oath you were genuinely in weak health."

"I saw him," snarled George. "A Scotchman of the most aggressive type. He did

not understand my case."

"Pardon me if I seem too personal, but he reported you were suffering from adipose tissue. That was what worried your poor Aunt. You will recall she asked you to make Raven Hall your home."

"Heaven forbid!" muttered George,

blenching.

"When you declined she came to see us. It was to her little short of a death-blow. Only by the use of every resource of patience and persuasion did we finally make her promise to afford you a little leniency."

"I am relieved beyond words," sighed George with profound relief and not without indignation that old Eldritch should make

such a brass band about nothing.

"Just a moment. She was, as you are probably aware, a very wealthy woman. But she did not believe in luxury. She lived hard and she expected others to maintain the tradition."

George looked from him to Mr. Richard. He found in both countenances the recognised simplicity and lovable childish innocence of the law.

"Perhaps," he said at last, "you will

explain."

in In a very few words. Your Aunt's will leaves you her fortune on certain conditions which are quite easily defined. She has defined them herself. In a letter. Shall I read it?"

"Nothing," said George with signs of throat trouble, "could be better."

It was at that point Mr. Eldritch loosened the hygienic stopper in the water carafe. He was an old pathologist in symptoms of mental breakdown.

"It was written only last week and in a wonderfully firm hand. But she was a phenomenal woman. Some day you will, I am convinced, appreciate her at her true value. Permit me to read:

"MY DEAR MR. ELDRITCH,

Apart from the formal document I want to explain my views, and as you will be adjudicator and visit Raven quarterly it is essential you understand the position.

You are aware of the long and honourable association of our family with the best traditions of this county. However people may sneer to-day, there is no hope for the future of England if it grows soft and effeminate. When I saw my nephew I felt as though I was looking at a cartoon of the last days of Rome——"

"Oh, I say!" expostulated George.

"And yet he is so like his Uncle Henry, the same build, the same expression, but whereas one once jumped the river Slasher I doubt if the other could drink a bottle of Vichy. I shall never forget my inspection of George and his effete flunkey."

"That is nothing short of libel," said George. "Wagstowe will certainly take action."

"Permit me to continue."

"My duty was very clear to me that day. I saw that sooner or later, whichever course was adopted, a very rigorous course of discipline might save two useless and degenerate human beings."

"Not in reference to me?" inquired George sharply.

"You and Wagstowe," politely amended Mr. Richard.

"My conditions therefore are these. If my nephew passes certain tests he will inherit my money, which is roughly two hundred thousand. If not he won't. The opportunities are such as his ancestors would have revelled in They are:

his ancestors would have revelled in. They are:
(a).—That my nephew George hunts the hounds in an adequate and sportsmanlike fashion for one season, and models himself upon his Uncle Henry. And that his flunkey—if he remains with him—whips in. This to remain until Clause (c) is fulfilled."

"Ha, ha!" came suddenly from George. Wagstowe whipping in! That was indeed rich.

"(b).—That the housekeeping remains in the sole charge of Mrs. Peppercorn as hitherto until Clause (c) is fulfilled."

"Is Mrs. Peppercorn poo poo?" asked George, "or merely vicious?"

"(c).—That within the space of six calendar months my nephew is married to the kind of girl whom in your opinion I would have approved both

on social and practical grounds, and who must also be a neighbouring landowner or the daughter of a neighbouring landowner."

"That," said George with finality, "rings the bell."

"The expression," remarked Mr. Eldritch distantly, "is unfamiliar to me, but if it indicates a reluctance to accept these conditions, all I can say is that so far as your income is concerned it has already ceased."

George rose, not without dignity. It is probable that even in that office, where so many remarkable disclosures were made, he was the only client who had a pack of hounds and a wife thrust upon him between 11 and 11.45 a.m.

"You will acquaint us with your decision, Mr. Fanshaw, before very long? And remember that as adjudicators we are pre-

pared to be considerate."

Faced by their remote and attenuated presences, to which the life he was condemned to would have been an outrage, George bowed coldly and returned to the world. A pauper. He walked slowly along. He bumped into people. Hounds? Marriage? ·What was to be done about it? Unfortunately, there was not much scope for wide speculation. As he had no money, no means of earning his daily champagne, and no constitution to go and beat up the Empire, he was forced to the conclusion that Aunt Judy held the cards. After all, pondered George, there have been Masters of Hounds who lived above the Christmas Annual standard. It was not essential to be conventional and to glory in galloping about. But he had heard of his Uncle Henry. Dreadful tales. How he jumped the Rector's barouche. Mrs. Peppercorn She could be snubbed. meant nothing. But the last condition was a knockout. He had carefully avoided marriage as unsuited to his temperament and income. He was one of those fastidious minds who are at peace in absolute solitude. He had no more against marriage than against Rugby football. It was merely a point of view. What was, however, little short of a return to the baronial era was the autocracy under which he married or starved. Which was it to be? In comparison with such a problem the abstractions of Hamlet are puerile. In his day Aunt Judith would have passed away before she had time to make a will, or there would have been a sharp finish to Eldritch and Eldritch and—to make a job of it—Scone. Apart from anything else, there was the crude fact that he owed

money. Quite a considerable sum in fact. Several hundred pounds. In a much smaller way Wagstowe had been very decent over his wages, considering he hadn't touched cash for a year. But it was the gentleman who had produced money on an expectation of Aunt Judith's will that made George feel squeamish. He had been charming at the time but there was an idle rumour that his temperament was volatile.

Elated by such jolly recollections, George arrived home. Wagstowe, faithful colleague of many years, was awaiting him. He searched his master's face, he heard his master's voice. He was satisfied. He was

confident he knew the worst.

"Wagstowe," said George, "I must prepare you for a severe trial."

"I feared it would be so, sir."

"It is considerably more so than you fear, then," retorted George. "In fact, Wagstowe, I don't know how to tell you to what straits we are come—but let me beg of you not to act hastily. You will recall that I owe you money. Consider that down the sink if you flinch from the call. Your future crashes. In fact, if either fails the other we both go down to the gutter in irredeemable misery and disgrace."

"Might I inquire, sir, how your Aunt

Judith's will affects me?"

"I had expected that question, Wagstowe. It shows a clear, almost legal, grasp of the essentials. I will tell you. Have you ever heard of a whip, by which I mean the individual who gallops about shoving hounds off the line?"

"I think I may say I have, sir," replied Wagstowe, permitting himself a faint grin.

"You are even more wonderful than I had hoped," said his master with relief. "But it is not a laughing matter. Unless you whip in to me you had better glance your eye over the vacant jobs in the *Morning Post*. I hope I make myself frank."

"Perfectly, sir. I should at this juncture like to point out that I was for a couple of seasons huntsman to the Bourn Hounds

in Leicestershire, sir."

"I thought you would not disappoint me. That is just where Aunt Judy—de mortuis, of course—left the metals. Because I, as you know, Wagstowe, have pushed along."

"I always heard you went well, sir."

"Thank you, Wagstowe. What about a baptismal glass of that old Madeira?"

With the decision that even a landowner's daughter was preferable to a landlady's

abuse, George, accompanied by Wagstowe, visited Tattersalls. As a prospective Master of Foxhounds he was ready for a courteous raising of hats, but apart from a fat man with check trousers standing on his feet while a playful horse missed his yellow waistcoat with a near hind, people remained calm.

Leaving Wagstowe, who seemed very much at home indeed, George went to the gallery, and looked down upon that incomparable assemblage, which, scrutinising horse after horse, never so much as indicate —except to the sacred box and then only by the twitch of an eyelid—that they will go another fiver. Horse after horse, from the elephantine weight-carriers so tenderly eved by elderly gentlemen of substance, to the thoroughbred weed so welcome to the subaltern on leave. They clattered up and clattered down, all sorts and sizes, colours and shapes, sound and unsound, old family friends deserted in their decline by those who should have known better, staunch partners of a season sold without a thank you, and the ones who are no friends of man or hound. The bidding was sticky or went up like the wings of a dove. Horses which George rather fancied were knocked down in a silence weighed down with decision; horses he would have blushed to ride, seemed to be a kind of religion to men with vulpine faces sharp with old cunning.

But it was No. 82 that made history. It was described in the list as "'Snowball,' grey mare, can creep and crawl anywhere, been ridden by a lady, an exceptionally hard little horse."

George had been aware for one or two lots that by his side a girl who was quite lovely was also quite unstrung. Moreover, as each horse was knocked down her excitement grew to such a pitch that twice she had pinched his arm with very normal fingers, and very charmingly apologised with a ravishing smile. George was not unmoved; in fact, he tried to behave in a purely paternal manner by smiling sympathetically. Everyone has a sort of standard of beauty, and she hit it—no question about it. when Snowball Lot 82 came the girl actually dug him in the ribs and said, "Do say you like her. Do say you think she'll go to someone who'll be kind to her."

George had not given much quiet meditation to Snowball, nor was he carried away by her. He only remembered something in Jorrocks like her. She was an angular, Roman-nosed, great-footed, short-backed,

flea-bitten grey, by Sunstar out of a hackney with plenty behind her saddle and a comforting share in front. She held her head high, her ears pricked, and stared

The auctioneer, with dispassionate courtesy to all and sundry, read out the arid details, and then with the same admirable composure remarked: "Well, gentle-



"'Twenty,' said George, deeply moved, and suddenly saw the face of Wagstowe looking upwards with signals of distress."

right away with that quiet, thoughtful scrutiny which means steady over timber. But she wasn't a beauty, nor under ten, nor sound, nor a horse from a famous country.

men, you have heard the description of the mare. She is evidently a useful sort. What shall I start her at? Anyone say fifty? Forty then? Come, gentlemen,

don't waste time. Will someone put her in at thirty? Twenty then? Well, bid something or I must take the next lot. Run her up, please."

Still that remorseless silence. They stared at Snowball. Once a dealer wrenched open her mouth, glanced inside as one might look at an account rendered, and rejoined his contemporaries. To the most casual observer Snowball must be almost a link with the last Zulu rising.

It was then that George realised the young woman was on his foot and leaning too far over the railing. Thoroughly nervous that he might be a witness in a suicide case, he clung to her arm. They then clung

together.

"They don't know her," she gasped over her shoulder; "they don't realise what she is. She'll jump in and out of a pig-sty. She's a jewel in a rough country. Shall I tell them ?"

"No," said George firmly, knowing that kind of thing had never happened at Tattersalls, and would cause a good deal of heart trouble among the older habitués.

"Ten pounds," said a voice below.

"Is she very unsound?" asked George, weakening.

"Not more than lumps and bumps. Every good horse has lumps and bumps or he wouldn't have learned his job. It's like wrinkles. It means knowledge."

"Is her wind gone?"

"Gone? Bless you, she'll lead the field and make a noise like an engine. Please buy her, she's such a dear and won't understand just anybody. I know she'd take to you because—— Oh, I don't know——"

"Twenty," said George, deeply moved, and suddenly saw the face of Wagstowe looking upwards with signals of distress.

"Twenty-five."

"Thirty," said George, avoiding Wagstowe's eye.

With a pang he realised that Snowball was

"You are lucky," said the girl with great

cordiality but with moist eyes.

For the first time he looked into her face. It was too broad between the eyes to be beautiful, the nose too short to pass the classical test, the mouth too large. generous, impulsive, honest face, tanned with sun and wind, but something beyond that. It had the beauty of candour and loyalty. This girl with her wonderful eyes and her splendid lithe figure was something George had never encountered. She was

his ideal. But obviously no landowner's daughter. Wagstowe was at his elbow. He could feel without being particularly temperamental hot psychic waves of righteous indignation. Without meeting his smouldering eye, he simply said:

"Box the mare down, Wagstowe."

"Oh, where is she going?" asked the

"To Raven Hall in Wales."

He noticed she was electrified.

"But that's where she's come from. She's been my horse with the hounds. I've been whip to Miss Judith. My name's Margaret Duncombe. Are you the new Master, Mr. Fanshaw?"

"Yes," said George. "I mean in a

"It's a queer country, Mr. Fanshaw. But Snowball knows every inch of it, so you'll be better off than I feared."

"You feared—"

"Well, no one likes to see anyone else in trouble, and the hounds are as Miss Judith made them. She loved a hunt, you'll understand, but she had her own ideas about it. They want knowing."

George pondered. He had a horse. He had a huntsman. He wanted a whip. "Miss Duncombe. I suppose you wouldn't come on as secretary and whip?"

"Of course I would, Mr. Fanshaw. I'd give a lot to make some of them look

silly."

"Look silly? You mean they don't think we can make a show. I have never known Wagstowe at a loss. I take it, Miss Duncombe, you are in with us now that you have Snowball back?"

"You mean I can have her?"

"For your very own," said George in a voice which made her look down and almost raised a flush to Wagstowe's cheek.

It is needless to say that all Downshire knew that Aunt Judy had lowered the curtain of her eccentric life with her best The whole place was on tenterhooks to see the new Master, of whom Aunt Judy had always spoken with ribald contempt. Those who did not actually know the facts put two and two together and made it rather more than four. To hunt any hounds is not everyone's pigeon, to hunt Aunt Judy's pack meant trouble all the To begin with, they were used to Aunt Judy and she had her own hound language, which was not orthodox; she cut her corners, because most of the country was worthy of a Cook's tour in the Alps;

and she made due allowance from long experience for hounds which were merely rabbiting, sheep worrying or speaking to hare. All these obscure facts were known to Aunt Judy. It was also known to her where every fox lay, the line he would take. and where she could get a spade and dig him out. To hand over a pack like the Llanbwlch Hounds to the care of any fellowcreature was not a secret stab in the back -it was a deliberate exposure before the civilised world. They all knew it, and their pride and affection for that great woman went up no end. They had thought she was not what she had been. With a sense of hot shame they realised that she had excelled their most daring hopes.

It was now October and the new Master, had he been the pick of High Leicestershire, could not possibly make a show in the time. The opening meet promised to be a record. It was more than rumoured that members of the Ludd, the Blue Harriers, and even such small deer as followers of the beagles and otter hounds, had earmarked the day when Aunt Judy's famous pack would provide a Roman holiday.

There was, in fact, a note of insufficiently suppressed excitement when George and Wagstowe arrived. To the latter, as one who had played many parts, it meant business. More than hit the eye. Quite

a game, in fact.

They reached Raven Hall and encountered Mrs. Peppercorn. They were glad to do so, as they were surprisingly peckish. She was a stout, red-cheeked woman who regarded them both with a sad and sympathetic gaze. After a few haphazard attempts to introduce a subject which was evidently preying on her congenial soul, she broke out with:

"Mr. Fanshaw, sir. I have my orders and that Mr. Eldritch has written me a very commanding letter—very commanding indeed. It's about the food, sir!"

"The food?"

"Yes, sir, the food. No one loves abundance more than I do. What I would like to see you sitting down to is a nice cut off the joint, a little underdone, with Yorkshire pudden and a nice cauliflower which we have plenty of, and a nice——" Overcome by some private emotion, she raised her apron to her eye.

"And I hope we shall," heartily broke in George, who was famished. "If you can throw in a nice sweet and a savoury—nothing elaborate—we'll be content. I dare say

Aunt Judith left a good Burgundy. That and a drop of port——"

"I never thought I'd live to see the day when I served up lentil soup and a rice pudden for two grown gentlemen."

"And I hope you won't, Mrs. Peppercorn. Horrible thoughts like that are due

to the weather."

"It's according to orders, sir. Just them two impoverishing courses and a dish of tea."

"Of tea-d'you mean for us?"

"Miss Judith drew out the meals shortly before she passed away. I'm sorry, sir. Let us hope and pray that all will come right in the end."

"Thank you," said George with a certain resemblance to Charles I in his last days; "all I hope is that the Coroner won't hold

you responsible."

In a mournful silence and light as a feather he rose and, wandering into the night, was suddenly quite unnerved by a savoury smell of steak. More, he heard the splendid sizzle of a frying-pan. Some have said there is no more beautiful sound in human life. It was borne on a breeze more fragrant than any summer foliage to his quivering nostrils. Sniffing it up with the expression of a religious devotee, George crept to the open window of the lodge. Slowly he tiptoed up the path. With a raptured face he crouched under the sill. Fried potatoes. In the dusk he pondered upon several things. Under Clause (b) it was not stated he should not eat. It had merely slipped Aunt Judy's mind that food might be procurable at her gate. There was a sudden dramatic silence inside that compassionate kitchen. Then a male voice said, "Got no A.1 sauce, dear."

That was too much.

"Stop," shouted George. "Let me in." His mournful cry of distress brought a girl to the door.

It was Margaret Duncombe. Behind her was a middle-aged man with the vague and improvident air of a professor. I know many people prefer their romances to be removed from the appeal of the baser side, but there's no getting away from the fact that, however much George had been carried away by Margaret at Tattersalls, she positively soared in his estimation then. Moreover, she welcomed him. Her father welcomed him. It was an evening in which the only cloud was the mournful fact that Margaret quite obviously was not a landowner.

As he returned homeward full of peace he stood suddenly at gaze. In a room—evidently the kitchen of Raven Hall—brilliantly silhouetted against the pleasant lamplight, sat Wagstowe. He was eating heartily. Opposite him was Mrs. Peppercorn, to whom it would have been evident to a child of six he had just paid one of his ponderous compliments. She also was assisting herself to a second helping. Whatever Clause (b) meant it was not including Wagstowe. No, not by a joint of underdone and mashed.

TT.

Aunt Judy's hounds were quite by themselves. In other packs the nature of the country, or the preference of the Master, or some other triviality, explains away the weak spots. In Aunt Judy's hounds it would have been just as easy to explain the currants in a plum duff. They were mostly rough, but they varied in size from a competent beagle to a promising staghound. There were hounds so large that they never noticed little ones running under them, hounds so old that they were massaged before they could come off the bench, hounds so wild that they never reached the Meet but stayed for the day in pheasant coverts. It had been Aunt Judy's pride that she never put a hound down except as a last resort, so there were shirkers, babblers, rabbiters, and a small resolute clique who simply did not hunt because they had never cared about it on æsthetic grounds.

But there were others. Most decidedly there were others. Old John said so, and as he had been kennelman for forty years he knew. They were bad to look at, speaking merely from the spectacular point of view. On the flags at Peterborough they would have come down pretty low. But they could hunt, that was the point. Aunt Judy had killed her foxes. She had her own way of going about it, but she had mopped up ten brace on the roughest country in the United Kingdom, and what they all wanted to know was whether poor George would ever put one on his legs, much less roll him over at dusk ten miles over the English border. The betting stood at about ten to one against and tending upwards.

"That one's very lame," said George as Wagstowe, having passed beyond speech, only emitted occasionally short repellent snorts of contempt.

"That's old Crusader," said John. "One

of the best, sir. 'E goes to the Meet in Miss Judy's dog-cart, being so stiff. can't 'unt, but if there's a fox within a mile of 'im 'e'll shove 'im out, and that's wot 'e's Then 'e follers in the dog-cart, sir. as wise as Moses. Next 'im. sir, is Canticle -a very knowin' bitch but runs mute, sir. She's jealous, that's wot it is-jealous. Doesn't like the others messin' about. 'Ates young 'ounds or 'ounds throwin' their tongues or runnin' 'ard. Not that she won't run, sir. But for runnin' give me Saucy. Here, Saucy-good old bitch. There's an 'untsman's friend, sir, if ever there was one. She'll 'unt a cold line till Christmas. she won't draw. No, sir, you might blow 'em 'ome as wait for old Saucy to draw. But when Crusader's found and Canticle's shoved Charlie away, then watch Saucy. Foller Saucy. Never mind those gallopin' flashy 'ounds, all drive and no nose. Let the field 'ave a bit o' sport with 'em, sir. Ride with Saucy, sir. She's never wrong, and if you lose 'er watch Samson, there for 'e is litter brother to Saucy out of Bouncer by Bachelor. 'E runs true, sir, and 'as a cry like this, sir, 'Wow, Wow, Wow'-Three times, sir. Like a dog fox in January, if you take my meanin'. There's never more than three couples wot I would call knowledgeable 'ounds in any pack and mostly not that."

"There's a nice-looking one," said George.
"Nice lookin' is as nice lookin' does," snarled old John. "That's Melody, a bitch as carries the conformation of a champion and 'olds the admiration of the field. But 'unt? That bitch would rather 'unt a Joe Jenkins Nanny-goat than a fox, sir. She's hornamental. Don't ever pay a second's attention to 'er, especially if she's speakin' and featherin' about. No 'ound ever turns 'is 'ead to 'er, sir. They know 'er."

"Will there be many out?" asked George.
The ancient man permitted himself a

ghastly grin.

"They don't mean no 'arm, sir, but there's not a follower of three 'unts who won't be 'ere. Not Tom Firr 'imself could 'unt this country without years of patient godfearin' experience. They're comin' in 'underds, sir."

"Very nice of them," said George, and exchanged a thoughtful glance with Wagstowe. It was evident that something must be done about it.

That something was being done about it would have occurred to even a simple-minded person had he seen George, Wag-

stowe, Margaret Duncombe and old John in close consultation for nearly five hours, after which Margaret emerged as Hunt secretary and second whip, and Wagstowe—first whip—took a late train to a destination not publicly advertised. As old John said in parting and speaking in a husky whisper, being a very secretive man, "Aniseed is all very nice, but 'ow it travels, sir. Give me a bag of litter, sir, and turpentine. It 'olds the grass. Like a vice. Run, sir—they'll run then to Buckingham Palace."

III.

It was a wonderful sight to see the motors rolling up to Raven Hall for that opening meet. Everybody was there, including Sir Peter Rundle, a new-comer who, it was hoped, would support the neighbouring Hunt, the Downshires. What was more. most of the Downshires were out to see the fun. Their country lay in the vale below, and Aunt Judy-who detested them-had tried for half a century to run a fox right over it, just to show them that Welsh hounds can run as well as hunt. They came ready to carry on the feud. With Sir Peter was his daughter Hermione, a pretty girl who went well enough for the Downshires, which is only so-so, and yet displays an easy contempt for the harriers, whose Master, Sir Richard Woolley, had taken to riding on medical advice. He had also come with his supporters, and as they were of the opinion that the Ludd neither rode to hunt nor hunted to ride, they were one and all on the side of George. It had been a matter of discussion whether the Downshires should trouble to ride. But it was agreed that courtesy-if only on the surface-was the hall-mark of such things, and a number were seen in pink on goodish horses.

Having assembled, they looked out for George, the hounds, and the fun in general. Margaret Duncombe, smart beyond description, counted one hundred and twenty and eighty mounted. She had arranged for photographers from the local Press, and as these gentlemen had been treated pretty decently, they were all out "pro bono publicano," as old John had it, when they snapped the kennels and a special one of that great hound Canticle.

There was a generous spread of refreshments on tables, and George in a weather-beaten third-hand pink coat which he had selected with great care at a famous establishment not far from Covent Garden, was saying how decent it was of so many to

come out and that he only hoped they would get a bit of a gallop. To all of which the Downshires, suffering internal pain at so much suppression of mirth, said they hoped so too. and was George satisfied with the pack? Yes, George was certain they would go well. which made the Downshires want to go behind the rhododendrons and have a good laugh. Where they failed to laugh, however, was when the new secretary, Margaret Duncombe, came round and capped them. She said she knew they would realise that the Hunt must keep solvent now Aunt Judy was gone. In fact, two guineas would about With saddened faces, hands sought pockets. It worked out at about £100 right away and made George the most admired man on the Welsh border.

That little side-line over, the field were astonished to see three upstanding thoroughbred horses coming round, not at all the goods for the Llanbwlch country, but the sort who hit or miss in a light-weight members' race. Good long-tailed stuff, well ribbed up and with nice sloping shoulders and jumping quarters. With them came Wagstowe, obviously a very hard case indeed in his hunting-kit, and old John, with a queer artful gleam in his wicked eyes.

The Hunt staff mounted and went round to the kennels. Only then did George remark to old John, "All right?" And old John replied, with a sidelong glance worthy of a Sioux Indian, "Percy's gone, sir. I only 'opes they don't overtake the boy, 'e bein' so slow in the understandin'. I don't know wot 'is poor Ma would say, that I don't—however good the object."

The pack, rough and smooth, large and small, active and elderly, surged out of their yard and sounded the wonderful note of the Welsh hound.

"For heaven's sake get old Crusader in his motor," said George.

They moved off. The field were gathered in the paddock to watch them pass. With a supreme effort they stared at that aston-

ishing pack without a grin.

"The Hunt staff," so the local paper recorded, "moved briskly away towards Hangman's Coppice, where the field, under the care of Miss Duncombe, the new secretary, were marshalled at the south end." Which meant that they were out of harm's way. In the meantime those Hunt officials were very busy indeed. Extremely active, in fact. Instead of staying at the end of the cover at which every proper huntsman would have thrown in hounds up wind, they

proceeded to the top and there halted while Wagstowe, who was once said to have the finest music in the Midlands, gave the Downshires a lesson in voice production and hound language which made Sir Peter say audibly to his daughter, "My dear, this is the Hunt for us," and set the Downshires snarling, "This fellow Fanshaw doesn't know what he's up against. That spinney's

From the heart of the wood came the clarion note of old Crusader. It was taken up by Saucy. Wagstowe was cheering them on.

It was then that old John raised his earsplitting "Gone away" holloa, and the fun began. Men discussing that famous run are unanimous that it showed an extraordinary knowledge of the country for



not a cathedral choir, as he'll find out in another hour."

That fellow Fanshaw was at that moment, however, in close conversation with simple-hearted old John, who was explaining things. He was pointing to a line of country, with every evidence of enormous anticipation.

Then progress, which stamps its miracles on the faces of the unwary, took action.

George to have got right through that covert when hounds went away on a screaming scent. The field were badly left. There is not a shadow of doubt there. And those who were bent on catching up had their work cut out. Never had a fox run straight over the vale, and never had he taken such a punishing country. The Luddites were mostly youngish men, with all their glories

behind them. They were in the habit of uniting in lamentations that the days when they lived in a riding country were passed. To their deep mortification, that fox was running over the Lentworthy stretch, which carries no wire whatever. Far ahead, they saw figures in pink taking fences with astonishing precision and ease. Old John had gone sharp right and just as though he

blown horse or the fact that someone else had come a purler. They were all there together, both Harriers and Downshires, and as they had always said the others couldn't jump they were horribly embarrassed. Worse than all, the first jump was a nasty post and rails and in a field with the gate maliciously locked. In that tumult of persons whose reputations were of long



"The field, under the care of Miss Duncombe, the new secretary, were marshalled at the south end."

knew what he was about. George had cut that slice. He was, in fact, a trifle ahead of his hounds in a nice over-hung lane. It was wonderful how he guessed the line. The other remarkable thing was that the fox was never viewed. But as no one was ever nearer hounds than three fields, that did not worry a soul. What did worry them was the country. The casualties were shocking. It was one of those flat spectacular bits where one simply couldn't retreat into the obscurity of a lost shoe or a

standing the prospect was embittering, especially as some quite quiet people like Sir Peter and Mrs. Crofts and Colonel Dring cantered over and on without hesitation.

"I'll break the top bar," shouted Major Wintercorn, "or Lady Pilcher will never get over." (Thank heaven for Lady Pilcher rang out in a score of panic-stricken hearts.)

In front hounds raced on. They went as far as Little Sweeting—a record point over a desolate country—and after them, riding

hard, came half a dozen who knew that this was a day in a thousand. Behind these, disaster lay heavy on the venturesome. But they, too, were thankful. They could at least say they came down at a hedge with a ten-foot ditch.

It was at a covert near Sir Peter's house that George was joined by Wagstowe.

"Now's the time," gasped the Master. And Wagstowe tooted four notes in quick succession. If anyone had been there they would have seen old John in a gorse covert shove something out of a bag and run for his horse.

Hounds checked badly enough for Sir Peter and some of the field to come up. The way the new Master cast them forrard was highly approved amongst those who turned up. And the way, ten minutes later, they rolled a fox over is history. It had taken two hours, and there was not a horse fit to go on.

IV.

That evening the Professor fell asleep and George asked Margaret if she would like to become the wife of a pauper who had not a bean or the mental calibre to make one. Lulled by the Professor's snores, George kissed her in the firelight, Clause (c) becoming at that moment defunct.

A fortnight later he dined alone with Sir Peter, and over the port that excellent man explained that so far as he was concerned he would hunt henceforth with the Llanbwlch or not at all, and that the Downshires were more than ready to lend that end of their country. With some fresh blood, there was no question the Llanbwlch would become famous.

"My dear Sir Peter," said George, "I'm

resigning."

"Resigning-might I ask why?"

"Because I cannot pass Clause (c) in my Aunt's will, under which I must marry a landowner's daughter."

"Nothing easier, my dear boy. The

country's bristling with candidates."

"I'm sorry, but I'm engaged to Margaret Duncombe."

"How very awkward," said Sir Peter, helping himself to another glass of port. "That's why I'm going back to Town."

"Of course—very proper," agreed Sir Peter, cutting a cigar, "but as a matter of fact Margaret is my god-child, and I suppose she did not bother to tell you she owns Parracombe Manor?"

George jumped to his feet.

"I say," he broke out, "you'll not mind

if I slip away?"

"I can't imagine why you're in such a hurry," remarked Sir Peter. "I always told your Aunt Judy you would choose Margaret, fortune or no fortune. I always knew she would have her own way with you. Fill your glass, my boy. Here's to Aunt Judy."

"To Aunt Judy."

"And the new Joint Masters," said Sir Peter, finding he was alone.

OPALS.

TEST not the jewel I have given you
With chilling scrutiny to learn its worth;
My love and faith with all they mean are true,
They need your trustfulness to call them forth.

A fire lurks deep in the blue crystalline Of opals, fire that in its warmth outvies The colder splendour of a diamond's shine, Yet worn by some, its beauty wanes and dies.

So power is hid in loving—infinite,
A brooding mystery, an ardent flame.
The soul is born to live for love's delight,
Search not too closely whence and how Love came.

MAY I. E. DOLPHIN.



CYRIL SCOTT.

A portrait taken by George Bernard Shaw at Torquay.

RANDOMRECOLLECTIONS

By CYRIL SCOTT

An interesting autobiographical article by the famous composer and pianist.

HE normal, human experience of birth happened to me in 1879. It was at Oxton, a residential quarter of Birkenhead.

My father was managing director of a well-known Liverpool shipping firm. His chief interests in life were his books and his garden. So great was his love of the Greek Testament that he rose every morning at five, and put in several hours of study before he went to his business. If my father had a vice, it was that he had no vices. Throughout his life he neither tasted alcohol nor smoked.

My very lovable mother was of a more conventional type. She spent most of her spare time working in aid of the local church. She must have crocheted hundreds of miles of wool during her life, making warm garments for those who needed them. She was extremely devout, and on the two occasions in her life when she entered a theatre, the memories of these wayward escapades, afterwards, made her feel very uncomfortable. My mother died at the age of eighty.

I was a delicate child and somewhat of an anxiety to my parents. Mostly I was educated at home with the aid of private tutors, but one year I was sent to Brussels and another year to a château near Rouen.

My mother told me that I began to play the piano by ear when I was one and a half years of age. The first piece I remember playing was "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Music was evidently in my blood, for at five I threatened to become an organgrinder, and at seven I managed to put on paper my Opus 1!

Until the age of sixteen my ambition was to be a pianist. Then I changed my mind and decided to be a composer. I studied harmony with the local organist and musical form on my own. I composed a fair number of pieces, including an ambitious trio for

piano, violin and 'cello.

In 1896 I urged upon my father the necessity of letting me go to Frankfort to study with Iwan Knorr, who I had been told was the best teacher of composition in Germany. My father remarked that if I was determined to end my days as an obscure music teacher with ragged cuffs and threadbare coat, I had better go. I did.

I had hoped that when Knorr heard my trio he would at once put me in the orchestration class. Far from it! He listened with exemplary patience to my crude and pretentious composition; then smiled amiably at me and said: "As an indication of talent, it is considerable, but as a work of art, it is nothing." I was put to writing the simplest forms, and it was two years before I was allowed to learn a single note of orchestration.

Despite his eccentricities and rough sarcasms, Knorr was a very lovable and congenial teacher. He certainly encouraged any individual thinking that peeped out in my music, and was never a stickler for the strict letter of the law. He had lived for many years in Russia, had counted Tchaikovsky among his friends, and had married a Russian woman.

Knorr suffered from a chronic bodily complaint and a trying, if adoring, wife. Knorr would sometimes invite a friend to his flat for a game of chess. At the most

exciting point the gas would suddenly go out. The guest would start up in alarm and wonder if the meter was in working order. Knorr would chuckle and explain that it was only his wife, who considered that they had played long enough!

I also had a few lessons from Humperdinck. This was long before the composition of "Hansel and Gretel," and Wagner's ex-secretary was then impecunious and unknown. The Director of the Conservatoire tried to give him a helping hand by engaging him as a professor. As a teacher he was incompetent, and soon resigned.

His teaching methods were odd. Often he would enter a class-room, and with a complete disregard of the assembled pupils sit down and count his ten fingers one against the other. He invariably forgot his pupils' names, and would disappear as suddenly

and erratically as he had come. Humperdinck and his family resided in a small flat. One morning they departed into the country for a long holiday. A few days went by, and then the tenants of the flats above and below became conscious of a particularly disagreeable odour. finally traced to the Humperdincks' flat. The smell became intolerable and the wildest conjectures as to its source began to circulate. Humperdinck was written to. ignored the letter. At length the landlord was summoned, and he considered himself justified in breaking into the flat. On the table were the putrefying remains of nearly the whole of a leg of mutton. Rumour and table were both promptly cleared away.

Besides composition, I had piano lessons, but in these I took very little interest. I did not mind playing my own music, but found it tedious to repeat the compositions of others, ad infinitum, no matter how full of genius they were. My teacher was Professor Uzielli, a Neapolitan, who had been a pupil of Madame Schumann. His olive Italian handsomeness was responsible for many heart-flutterings among the women students of the Conservatoire.

For three years I studied in Frankfort, enjoyed myself immensely, and made some lifelong friends. These included my fellow-students, Balfour Gardiner, Roger Quilter, Percy Grainger and Norman O'Neill. The poet Stefan George came into my life. He was not only a great poet, but looked one, for his features were a curious mixture of Henry Ainley and Dante Alighieri. He remains the most striking and unusual personality I have ever met. His friendship for

me produced a marked effect on my inner spiritual life. Not only did he introduce me to poetry, but also taught me the necessity of taking an interest in all branches of art and learning, besides music.

Through his kind offices my first Symphony (long since destroyed!) was performed at Darmstadt. During my last few days at Frankfort it was arranged that it should be given the next season.

least half the parts had still to be done. Fortunately, Grainger was still in Frankfort, and he came to my rescue in no uncertain fashion. The two of us sat through the night completing this unspeakably tedious task.

I had been asked to conduct the work myself, but made such a hash of the rehearsal that I was only too glad to leave the performance in the more experienced hands of the Court Conductor.



AT THIRTY-THREE.

A drawing by Jane de Glehn.

In the intervening time I returned home and did little else but kick my heels and wait impatiently. But in good time I sent the orchestral score, together with an adequate fee, to a copyist.

I arrived in Frankfort to be met by a tearful copyist, who not only had failed to complete his job, but was equally certain that he could not do so in the two days that remained before the first rehearsal. At

The Symphony was received with boisterous applause and equally emphatic hissing. Two newspapers slanged it unmercifully and referred to it as student's work; a third said that so far England had produced no great composer, but that the writer saw in me the possible musical Messiah!

One satisfying result was that the conductor of the Symphony Concerts at the Frankfort Palmengarten, who was present.

promised to give the Symphony another performance in a few weeks' time. Naturally I did not want to miss this, so I stayed on in Germany with Grainger.

Eventually I received a letter from Herr Kampfert, the conductor, requesting me to



MRS. CYRIL SCOTT.

present myself the next morning at nine at the Palmengarten for a rehearsal. I was carly astir, and arrived at the Hall to find a solitary charwoman dusting chairs. There was no sign of any orchestra.

"Isn't there a rehearsal here this morn-

ing?" I inquired.

"Not that I know of," she replied.

Some time after, an attendant came up to me with a note. There was to be neither rehearsal nor performance—why, I have forgotten. I made my way back to the pension through the rain, feeling a very dejected person.

Kampfert atoned for this curious treat-

ment a few weeks later by performing my Overture to Pelleas. This time there was no hissing.

After the concert, Stefan George proposed that I should go to Berlin with him. The visit was to be a political one, to introduce

me to "useful" people. Arrived in Berlin, George took me to see Melchior Lechter, the painter, designer, and stained-glass window artist.

His flat was a strange experience for me. It was not unlike going into church. The rooms had stained-glass windows and the furniture was severely ecclesiastical. There was even a faint suggestion of burning incense. I detested all this at the time, and ridiculed it to George when we left. But its abiding impression of being a sanctuary had an effect upon me when I came to furnish my London house, for this has similar stained-glass windows, and Gothic furniture.

I met many other people. Once I dined at the house of a noted professor and sat next to his wife. She told me that she was going to make a dreadful confession. I was all attention.

"I don't very much care for Mozart," she said.

"Oh, that's nothing," I replied; "I don't care for Beethoven."

There really was a horrible pause in the general conversation. At the end of that chilly evening, I thought it was high time I returned to my native country.

I had finished my student days. What was I to do? It was at length decided that I should set up in Liverpool as a teacher and open my campaign with a recital.

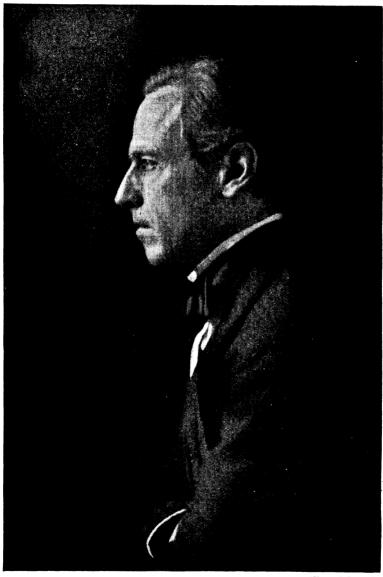
This last was given in the autumn of 1900. It was a great success. The net result was two pupils and an old gentleman who paid me half a guinea an hour to play Bach to him.

Perhaps mothers were reluctant to send

their daughters to such a young man for instruction. I like to think that it was this reason and not the one Sir Landon Ronald suggested to me some years later, when I was in London looking for composition pupils.

"Why, my dear fellow," he commented,

one has a greater admiration for John's work than I, but as a man I found him disconcerting. I have never met anyone with quite the same flair for remaining silent. He sat and studied my physiognomy for upwards of half an hour. He neither com-



CYRIL SCOTT TO-DAY.

[Howard Instead.

"people think you don't know the rules, so how on earth can you be expected to teach them?"

My first lodgings were dingy and uninspiring, but it was here that I received a visit from Augustus John, the painter. No

mented upon it nor upon anything else. I did not recover from my embarrassment until some time after his departure.

Soon after I set up house with Dr. Charles Bonnier, the friend of Mallarmé, and himself a poet. Our tastes in decoration were absurdly dissimilar. Mine were monastic and ascetic, Bonnier's were distinctly Parisian. I remember that his study was murally surrounded with posters by L'Autrec, all depicting ladies exhibiting legs of every shape and size. Most incongruously, in the centre of the room was a large harmonium. Only Bonnier knew why it was there.

But Bonnier and I got on excellently. Fired by his enthusiasm, I began to write poetry, and it is an unusual satisfaction to me that George Moore admires my verse. I also translated Baudelaire's "Fleurs du

that he could not have been so idle as he claimed.

In the autumn I completed my second Symphony and improved a piano quartet which I had commenced in the spring. Two months later this was performed in the St. George's Hall, Kreisler playing the violin and myself the piano.

After the performance, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who had been in the audience, asked me to call on him the next morning. We discussed my music, more particularly my theory of continual musical flow.



THE HALL.

Mal," which, later, was to bring me the friendship of that fine poet, Arthur Symons.

The summer of 1901 was spent with Bonnier at his house in the North of France. On my way there, I had broken my journey to call on Balfour Gardiner, who was then living in Bloomsbury. He told me he was nervy and irritated by the barrel-organs, whose noise stopped him from working. I suggested his moving into the country, but he had tried that and been driven back to London. Barrel-organs were more bearable than the incessant chattering of the birds. But during the afternoon he played me so many new compositions that it was evident

"It's all very fine," said Stanford, "but one must have breathing space."

"But Bach flows on without a break," I replied.

"Ah, Bach is Bach," clinchingly replied Stanford.

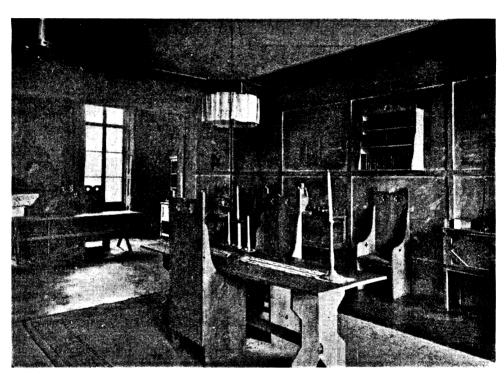
In March, 1902, I visited Dr. Hans Richter at Bowden, the immediate object being to show him my "Heroic Suite." I played it to him and he promised to perform it—a promise he kept, for soon after he conducted the Suite in Manchester. It was not a genuine success, the applause being half-hearted. Notwithstanding this, Richter gave the work another hearing at Liverpool.

This time the applause satisfied even me, especially when Richter called me out and shook hands with me on the platform.

I liked Richter, and occasionally would go and have tea or lunch with him. He once said of Sir Henry J. Wood, "To think that he should go and give Beethoven's Ninth Symphony—the most beautiful thing that exists in the whole of music—and give it while people walk about. . . ." I explained to Richter that if people had dared to walk about at these so-called Promenade Concerts, they would probably be lynched! Richter

Paderewski spent the evening playing billiards and smoking Russian cigarettes. He gave me a lift home in his four-wheeler. I told him that it was hearing him play when I was ten years old that had decided me to become a musician. He leant forward and pressed my hand. "May I bring you luck," he said; "and send the Concerto to my hotel to-morrow." He may have brought me luck, but he never played my Concerto.

I went to Paris, hired a piano, and tried to work. I put into practice a suggestion I had read in a book, that creative artists



DINING ROOM.

seemed much relieved that he had been deceived by the title of the Concerts.

Sir Henry was a good friend to me in the early stages of my career, for he gave many first performances of my orchestral works.

The next event of importance was the coming of Paderewski to Liverpool to give a recital. I met him one evening at the house of a mutual friend, who had recommended my piano concerto to him. I found him fascinating, especially when he put his hand on my shoulder and, after steadily looking at me, said: "There is something in your face which impresses me—I should like to see that piano concerto,"

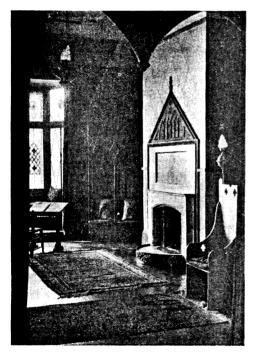
should eat only once daily, the effect of this being to stimulate the brain. Every evening I dined regularly at eight. Apart from this meal, I had nothing all day. Physically, this regime made me feel like a lion, and from morn until night I tramped the streets of Paris, untiringly. But my brain refused to act!

But if Paris did not prove so inspiring as I had hoped, it had compensations. For example, I met Ravel and Debussy.

Ravel in those days reminded me of a John Leech drawing. The arrangement of his moustache and whiskers was unlike anything I have ever seen on a man's face. The

Leech effect was completed by his tail-coat suits, with their large and unusual patterns. The Ravel of to-day is clean-shaven and modishly attired. He played me his string quartet, which I still think the best sounding quartet I have heard.

Debussy I met at the house of Mme. Bardac, the pale, flaxen-haired woman who became his second wife. Debussy arrived in a hat as large as a parasol, and I remember that she would not invite him to stay to dinner because of this! It was the fashion to wear "toppers" to this function, and not even for Debussy would Mme. Bardac make any exception!



MUSIC ROOM.

Debussy's personality was neither unpleasant nor impressive. One expected something more striking from his pale, Christ-like face. It has rather too often been said that my music derives from Debussy's. When I came to know him well, I played many of my compositions to him, and asked his opinion. Most emphatically he told me that there was no similarity whatsoever.

The last time I visited Debussy was in 1913. His studio was, as ever, uncannily neat and tidy. There was a piano, a large desk, a table and some chairs, and many books, but there was no visible sign of any

music. Debussy was oppressed with the obsession that he had reached the end of his inspiration. He died of that dreadful disease, cancer.

In 1918 I wrote my opera "The Alchemist," and showed it to Sir Thomas Beecham, who promised to produce it at Covent Garden, but financial difficulties supervened. Three years later the score was published in Germany. It excited interest, and three opera houses were anxious to have the première. Finally Wiesbaden was decided on, the libretto was translated, everything was ready—and the opera house was burnt down! Ultimately, five years later, the opera was produced in Essen.

But if Beecham failed me over my opera, I have to thank him for the first performances of my piano concerto, and also of the Two Passacaglias for Orchestra.

I had now been living in London for some time. During the early part of the War, I went to stay as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw at Torquay.

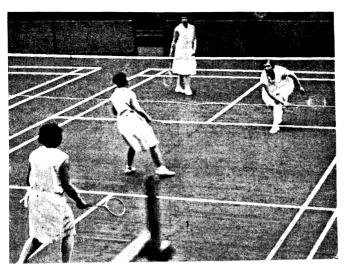
I greatly enjoyed this visit and was interested to observe that Shaw did all his writing in shorthand, a gift I considerably envied. I often wish there was a musical shorthand. Before I left Mrs. Shaw told me "G. B. S. spends most of his evenings playing your things. He can play them."..."

After the War I toured in America. I think the tour was very successful. But it was my home-coming that most impressed itself on my memory. I had written to my housekeeper informing her of the time of my arrival. I was in high spirits at being home again as I rang the bell at the door of my house. No response. Curious, I thought, and got the key out of a suitcase.

On my desk was a note marked "Strictly Private."—" Forgive me after all your great kindness to me—but I can't face any more trouble." The note contained a neat pile of pawn-tickets. I wondered if any blankets had been left in the house for me to sleep between. Then I noticed a large sheet of paper which had been pinned on to the wall. Printed on it in block letters was, "When you go upstairs, don't take a light—the gas is leaking."

I did go upstairs and the smell of gas became appallingly worse. In the twilight of my bedroom and in front of the gas-stove I saw that the eiderdown was on the floor. Inside was my housekeeper, the gas-tube in her mouth. She was dead.

That was my home-coming.



LADIES' DOUBLES.

THE LURE OF BADMINTON

By PETER MONTGOMERY

An article that should prove of interest alike to the old hand and the beginner.

Photographs by Sport and General.

T is a remarkable tribute to Badminton that with the close of each successive lawn tennis season an increasing number of players turn their thoughts towards this indoor game—yet many of them have never seen Badminton really well played. While this article will, it is hoped, enlighten such men and women as to the possibilities of the game, it is also hoped that it will not be without interest for those who are fast becoming "old hands."

Badminton may not be a product of the age, but its popularity has been half-humorously indicated as a sign of the times. To explain: not so many years ago play was summarised as the act of throwing the shuttle across the net and keeping it up as long as possible. Nowadays such things as "keeping it up" are simply not done, and those who indicate the popularity of Badminton as a sign of the times, point out that

the shuttle is now banged down with Bolshevik venom at any and every opportunity.

For once (to develop the simile) the world of sport has benefited by this tinge of iconoclasm, for the bashing down of the shuttle is emblematic of the sweeping away of the cobwebby, traditional mock stateliness that once beset the game. Whether one is a good or an indifferent player, or merely a spectator, one cannot escape the feeling that here-whatever one makes of it personally—is a game, and a good game. What the players of old thought about it one would dearly love to learn. In their crinolines and long sleeves, the men in frockcoats and top-hats, they must have been bored beyond expression: all honour to them for their courage in carrying on under such terrible handicaps, and thus bearing their part in the gaiety of nations andwhat is more important to us-preserving the game for the present generation to transform.

The greatest drawback of Badminton to-day is that it can only be properly played indoors. It is played on lawns well screened from wind, but one's arrangements are entirely at the mercy of the weather, and rude Boreas will "crash" uninvited into the most perfectly organised Badminton party. On the other hand, the very fact that it is primarily an indoor game, playable in all weathers, renders Badminton an excellent complement to lawn tennis. The real trouble lies in the fact that the number of halls suitable for Badminton is far short of the demand. It is only this dearth of accommodation that has prevented the game from becoming even more popular.

To have seen a good game of Badminton is to have been infected with a keen desire to play it; not to have seen it well played is to be ignorant of the possibilities of this

really first-class game.

Is it speed you desire? Badminton can give you something much faster than lawn tennis. Is it exercise? Badminton will exercise not only your body but your mind. With quite a modest battery of shots you can cause destruction on your opponent's side of the net if you are prepared to use your head, while you will hardly find another game of its class which will exert your physical strength to such an extent. Eyes, feet, arms and legs are all at work all the time, and it is not surprising that Badminton is becoming recognised by many as a necessity if they are to keep physically fit during the long winter months, when even hard-court tennis is unobtainable for weeks at a time.

Badminton, however, cannot be played in a low-roofed hut. For anyone hoping to attain prominence it is almost the greatest mistake possible to begin in such surroundings. However hard you work, you can never play Badminton as it should be played unless the roof is at least twenty feet above the floor, and the intervening space free from rods and rafters.

The reason for this should be apparent when the size of the court and the average reach of a player are taken into consideration. Two players side by side at the net and able to reach almost to the roof of a low hut could stop anything aimed to pass above the tape; the game would be a fiasco. Badminton without the lob may be likened to the play of *Hamlet* minus the essential player, and you cannot lob in an ex-army hut,

Now the tennis player used to a fast game will probably snort when I prescribe a high roof and lobbing, but in Badminton lobs are far more generally used than in tennis. They have a definite offensive value, and do not rank merely as ballons d'essai, though it is rather good and risky fun to put one up occasionally just to see what a strange opponent will make of it.

To revert to the simile adopted at the beginning of this article, he who would succeed at Badminton must ever be murmuring (with the Reds) "Down with it!" But (also like the Reds) he must see to it that he and he only does the "downing." Of course, if he is playing doubles his partner may also "down," but the game is to prevent the opposition party from attaining a position from which it can "down," and so to tie its hands, or force them, that the most they can do is to "keep it up" until at last the shuttle reaches the floor.

The art of Badminton, in short, consists in striving for a position from which to bring off a coup—which generally takes the form of an overhead smash—and at the same time so to outmanœuvre one's opponents that not only does one evade their plots and subterfuges but one also wheedles them into false positions, from which their only strokes are of a defensive nature.

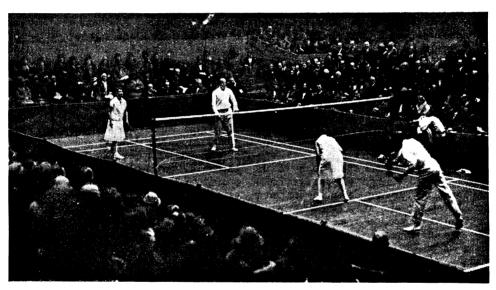
It may be objected that "any fool can 'down' a shuttle once it is in the air": in Badminton the foolishness consists in putting the shuttle in such a part of the air that your opponent has an opportunity of smashing, or at any rate of smashing effectively. You cannot possibly avoid giving him such openings when the roof is only six feet above the tape: hence the need of a lofty hall; hence the handiness of the lob.

But if Badminton consisted merely of lobs and smashes it would have died a natural death with the Victorian battledore-andshuttlecock. In the opinion of many the cream of the game lies in the short gamethe net play. The nearest analogy one can think of is good work with a mashiea combination of firmness and delicacy, coupled with accurate judgment. Matchwinning play, in short. These finer touches emerge into Badminton at various phases of the game, but the real opening comes after the shuttle has been in the air for a few exchanges and the players are warming up to a good rally. All four are slogging hard-good, full-blooded drives-and then suddenly as a racket comes forward towards the shuttle, there is a slight change in the flexion of the guiding wrist, and what promised to be a bullet-like flight is almost miraculously transferred into a delicate toss just carrying the shuttle beyond the tape.

But the alert opponent has caught sight of that treacherous wrist, and like a dart he has betaken himself to the net, arriving only just in time, nevertheless, to get his racket below the shuttle. Now watch what happens. He of the changing wrist (or his partner) has also dashed in to the net, knowing full well that the shuttle is so close against the other side of the net that it can only be sent upwards, cannot be driven towards the back of the court. This is no

to put the shuttle beyond the reach of his opponent and the rally is over. And if the match is watched by an audience you are suddenly made to realise (if you had not realised it before), by the breaking of the utter stillness, that Badminton can "grip" a crowd as fast as football can.

The tricks and traps of Badminton are, nevertheless, not always apparent to the onlooker, and the non-playing spectator sometimes dismisses the game as overrated and comprising nothing more than hard hitting and considerable agility on the part of the players. That is a libel on one of the most thought-provoking games we have. It would not be too much to say that the brainwork in a first-class Badminton match



MIXED DOUBLES: ENGLAND V. SCOTLAND.

less well known to the player who has the shuttle, and who deftly turns it sideways and slithers it along the tape so accurately that one waits almost breathlessly to see which side it will fall.

So, too, does he of the wrist (or his partner). Like cat after mouse he scurries along the net, ready to divert the shuttle directly it can be played. He must not touch the net with racket or person: he must not put the shuttle high enough to give his opponent a chance to "down" it. His task is difficult, and only extreme delicacy and control can save him. And so the game suddenly closes up and the shuttle passes from racket to racket at the rate of thirty, fifty, sixty times a minute.

Then, at last, one of the players manages

is at least as heavy as the more obvious footwork. But the game works out so rapidly that the uninstructed onlooker may well be pardoned for failing to observe the underlying motives of the players.

That guile is a necessary ingredient of the game will be realised when there are considered the following three factors: the size of the court, the speed of the shuttle (coupled with the fact that the game consists entirely of volley-shots), and the average agility of players. It so happens that these three factors are so nicely adjusted that reasonably active players can cover the court fairly comfortably—or they would be able to do so were Badminton the straightforward hit-and-smash affair it is often adjudged to be. Fortunately for the

game, it is more subtle than that. It is the introduction of deception, with the aim of defeating mere speed, that has raised the game to its present high level of popularity, and which incidentally enables many a veteran to go on playing sound, hard games long after his physical fitness has warned him that, youth is not perennial.

To the onlooker, even a service may appear guileless; yet watch such a player as Mr. Devlin as he crouches to receive the shuttle. Observe how every nerve and muscle is taut as he peers through the net towards the server. Such players as Mr. Devlin are very uncomfortable people to serve to: their whole attitude speaks so eloquently of mobility and watchfulness that it is extremely difficult to surprise them, to serve a shuttle which they are incapable of returning with Wasted on them are the elementary tricks of looking at the roof before serving: they know very well that such an upward glance is no indication that you are about to serve a high shot; equally lost on them are the semi-furtive crouchings which often mislead novices into expecting a very short service. Such very wideawake opponents are really rather annoying at times!

The tricks of players about to serve are always worth watching: one is never quite sure how many stages of deception are being acted. Take those players who, when about to serve, perform a slight motion of the wrist and knees that can only be described as a "lollop," as though by the springing of their knees and the scooping of the wrist they hoped to raise the shuttle The whole thing is obviously assumed, but the interesting question for the spectator is this—supposing the prospective recipient of the service to have seen the movement, what did he deduce from it? Did he think the movement was acted to deceive him into thinking a high shot was not coming? On the other hand, whatever he himself thought, what did he persuade the server to think he thought? That is where the fun of Badminton is found: deception and counter-deception carried to the nth degree.

At times the antics of servers become very theatrical, and arrière pensée is only skin-deep, as Pat would put it. At other times the air is so thick with intrigue and the pitfalls so deeply laid that guile defeats its own object. So we run the full cycle, and many good players consider, after all, the sphinx-like attitude of Miss Hogarth is the

more confusing by its (apparent) simplicity. Miss Hogarth is probably one of the foremost exponents of the back-hand service; but whatever kind of service shot she has in store, her preparatory attitude is the same, nor can one judge from her noncommittal expression what is about to happen. If Miss Helen Wills has the "poker face" of the tennis court, surely Miss Hogarth, in the manner in which she gives nothing away by her expression, may be said to possess the "poker face" of the Badminton world, among the ladies at any

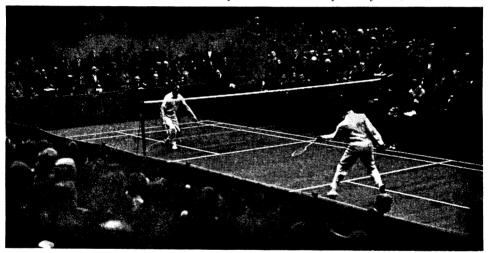
One is sometimes asked, rather embarrassingly, "Am I too old to take up Badminton?" The question is embarrassing because, as will have been seen from the foregoing remarks, the answer does not depend entirely upon age or even upon physical nimbleness. More than anything success depends upon mental alertness. One must have a certain indefinable instinct that is common to all who play ball-games with keenness. One must understand something of the moves of the game—a kind of knowledge which can be picked up to a great extent by looking on. But above all else one must have the knack of anticipating the moves of an opponent; and the answer to the question heading this paragraph is really wrapped up in the questioner's qualifications in this respect. A young player, with plenty of energy to burn up, can afford to be less economical in his movements than an older player; he can dash hither and thither, to the confusion of his partner and the probable delight of his audience, and so long as he lasts the game and gets his proportion of shots home, no serious complaint can be made. But the older man, or the player who is desirous of saving himself up for eventualities, can attain precisely similar results at about half the output of energy merely by using native wit and anticipating opponent's moves.

There is a moral in all this for young players. It doesn't pay to be too prodigal of energy, and the more one can keep in reserve, the more able one will be to take advantage of any weakening on the opponent's part. But there is more in it than that. Badminton, after all, is not a series of undignified scramblings after the shuttle. One must cultivate style and, what is more, one must consider one's partner. No one enjoys playing with a harum-scarum youngster who skips about the court like a will-o'-

the-wisp, alternately poaching in the most glaring manner and leaving gaps in the defence which have to be filled with great and unnecessary expenditure of energy, and few games are won with such partners. On the other hand, the partner who "knows his place" and can not only fill it but can also contrive to be handy to help his partner out of a tight corner, is not only an asset to any court, but is a player of promise.

Lest it be thought, from what has been written, that Badminton is invariably a solemn game, during which all mirth is tuboo, it may be pointed out that it offers countless opportunities for jokes that are practical and humorous. And strange things happen without any bidding. A certain club, for instance, in a Midland city,

for instance, an episode in a recent All-England Finals match, a men's doubles. One pair had the greater reputation; the others were felt to have a very sporting chance of bringing off the match, provided they kept their heads. The first set opened uneventfully enough, each side taking the measure of the other, and the quasi weaker side desperately anxious to let nothing pass. Their anxiety in fact was plain to all observers, not least to their opponents. Then it led them into a slight collision. The shuttle had been lobbed into one of their corners, and rather than let it fall unheeded both the anxious ones dashed to the corner, where, as already stated, they collided one with another. They extricated themselves very neatly and, as a matter of



MEN'S SINGLES: ENGLAND V. SCOTLAND.

play on a covered-in swimming-bath, and one of the rich memories of that club is of the evening when a very active young man landed from a high leap on the corner of a section of the flooring that was not properly secured. The section pivoted up, and the active young man disappeared into the depths below (fortunately the bath was empty of water). With a loud bang the board fell back into position, and when the active young man's partner looked round she was pardonably surprised at finding herself partnerless! Needless to add, the young man was promptly extricated, none the worse for his dive into obscurity, although his flannels had lost something of their former immaculateness.

Those who like their jokes less redolent of the slapstick and a trifle more barbed, are not likely to be disappointed. Take, fact, the shuttle went back over the net in good style, accident notwithstanding.

Such a mistake was really rather foolish for players of standing, however, and there was no doubt that each of them felt rather sore about it. In some way this fact dawned upon the leading player on the other side, and from that moment the match was as good as over. Watching, one noticed how from time to time he would lob the shuttle over into the same corner of the court with the sole idea of reducing the opponents' morale. His reasoning presumably was that every time the shuttle dropped into that corner the two players would be reminded of their mistake, and so gradually acquire a kind of inferiority complex. That his reasoning was correct seems indicated by the fact that his side won the match—a victory for sardonic humour.



PEOPLE WE SHOULD LIKE TO MEET

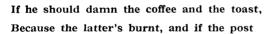
THE IDEAL WIFE

By GEORGE THOMAS

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES GRAVE

HATEVER else she does, her special forte
Is that her husband is her foremost thought,
Except on those occasions, there are such,
When hubby hopes that she won't think too much.

He is the star, the shining constellation,
About which she revolves with adoration.
If he, on rising, should get out of bed
On the wrong side, and promptly lose his head,
His stud as well, then bluster and get rude,
She's patient, for she knows this little mood.



Is late and minus letters he must dive
Into his coat to sprint for the 9.5,
'Tis she who while he cuts a frantic caper
Finds him his pipe, his baccy and his paper,



And unperturbed surveys the breakfast wreck, Returns unruffled the connubial peck, And then, when storming out he jams the gate. Will never murmur, "Darling, don't be late."

She's then engrossed with mundane home affairs, Believes him occupied with business cares, And never rings him up to find if he Is taking that new typist out to tea.



When worn out from the office he returns,

A meal awaits him—not mere smells and burns—

A dainty dinner nicely cooked and served,

Better, she thinks perhaps, than is deserved.

And when of her concoctions he must tire,

She leads him to his slippers by the fire.

But though she is a genius gastronomic

She's nothing if she isn't economic,

And doesn't break his after-dinner sleeping

With feverish requests for more "housekeeping."

Should he on some occasions be detained For business reasons, he is not arraigned Next day before the Court of his adoption And fined a new fur coat without the option, But she accepts with philosophic caution His tale of carefully rehearsed distortion.

And if, oh Heaven forbid, she hears his key Grate in the lock at half-past two or three,

A muttered curse, a bump, and sees a vision Of heavy bodies meeting in collision, She doesn't call out, tear her hair or weep, But shuts her eyes and dozes off to sleep.

His pals are always welcome to the house,
And, if they stay to dinner, not a grouse
Escapes her lips, nor even when they 'phone
To drag him off to bridge, while she alone
Spends yet another evening husbandless,
And busies herself cutting out a dress.
Nor does she raise a murmur each week-end
When he spends two days golfing with a friend.

In fact she is the paragon of wives,

The sort some men just long for all their lives.



SEVENTEEN

By RICHMAL CROMPTON

• ILLUSTRATED BY F. H. WARREN

....

SHE recognised him at once. As soon as she entered the hotel lounge behind her aunt and saw him there sitting by the fireplace her heart gave a leap, then raced unevenly. He was Frank Merridew, the actor, and she had seen him only last week in the first "modern" play she had ever been taken to. It was inevitable, of course, that she should have fallen in love with him. She was seventeen, and he was round about fifty and strikingly handsome.

In a way, she wasn't actually surprised to meet him at the hotel. She'd known all the time that Fate would bring them together sooner or later. She'd read so many stories of love at first sight. She'd been so certain too that his eyes had met hers with understanding (she'd been sitting in the back row of the stalls) over and over again in the course of the play. Like her, he must have been waiting for Fate to bring them together.

... She wasn't surprised, either, to find an elderly and unattractive woman sitting by his side reading a magazine.

The play had been about that, and somehow she'd known all the time that it was true. In the play he'd been married to a harsh and unsympathetic woman—a woman who did not understand him, who wounded his exquisite sensitiveness at every turn. It wasn't this woman, of course. The part had been taken by an actress famous for her rendering of such parts. . . . But the girl, who knew that he was married, had become more and more certain as the play proceeded that he was as unhappily married in real life as he was in the play. He was married to a woman in real life just like the wife in the play. He couldn't, couldn't play the part like that if he weren't really unhappily married. . . . The heroine of the play had been a young girl who had given him all the sympathy and friendship his wife denied him. But yet she had refused to take him from his wife.

"You belong to her," she had said, and

he had bowed his beautiful dark head and acquiesced.

It had all been most touching, and of course the girl had seen herself as the heroine throughout the play. Somewhere, somehow she would meet this man and give him all the sympathy and friendship his wife denied him. . . . And, of course, he must have known it, too. He had met her eyes where she sat in the back row of the stalls and known—he must have known—that she was the only woman in the world who would ever understand him. He must have known that their destinies were inextricably linked by Fate. . . . What had seemed to make it more inevitable was the fact that her name was the same as the girl's name in the play, Rosamund.

She followed her aunt through the lounge in a sort of dream. Her aunt (whose guest she was for this holiday) was old and rheumaticky and had come to the hotel for a cure and doesn't come into the story at all. The actor had lowered his eyes to his newspaper after that first glance at the girl. The girl stood near him, aware of him in every nerve, while her aunt spoke to the manager about her room. After a short silence he glanced out of the window, then said to the woman, "Looking a little brighter, isn't it?" The woman shrugged her shoulders, tightened her already tight lips as if to indicate that she had heard, but made no answer or comment.

The girl went upstairs behind her aunt to unpack and change from her travelling clothes. She hurried over both packing and changing. She wanted to get down to the lounge again quickly. Suppose he went out before she got down... That was a terrible thought. The girl had changed into a white jumper suit. She looked very young and adorably pretty as she entered the lounge. Again the actor glanced up at her. His eyes were grey and deep-set. No girl of seventeen could meet them without receiving

a thrill. The girl thrilled to the depths of her being. He recognised her, of course, as the girl who had sat in the back row of the stalls on that fateful night when first their eyes had met, as the girl who was to be from now on throughout all his life his confidante and friend. But of course she wouldn't take him away from his wife. She glanced at the unattractive woman (she was most satisfactorily unattractive) and her rosebud of a mouth parted softly as she said the words to herself, "You belong to her. . . . " She wondered how long it would take them to get to that stage. She'd only come to the hotel for a fortnight. But still she knew from the novels she had read that such affairs move very quickly. . . . She'd only left school last month. It was very wonderful to plunge at once like this into the one and only romance of her life. actor went on reading his newspaper, the unattractive woman went on reading her novel. The girl's aunt came down and ordered tea. The girl, who had a healthy school-girl appetite and was very hungry after her journey, ate only a microscopic piece of bread and butter and a still more microscopic sandwich. She eyed the cake wistfully, but she had not read her love stories for nothing. She knew how the heroine of a life romance should behave. . . . She did not, at any rate, eat a large meal on the occasion of her first meeting with her soul-mate. Having finished her inadequate meal and having assured herself (without in the least convincing herself) that her hunger was completely assuaged, she took up a magazine, and, trying to look as detached as possible from her aunt (who was making a large meal in defiance of doctor's orders), she idly turned over the pages. She didn't look at him, but she was aware of him all the time. He was frightfully, frightfully handsome. He was sitting only about a yard and a half away. She thrilled whenever he cleared his throat or turned over a page of his newspaper. "You belong to her . . ." she was saying to herself. After all, she didn't see why they shouldn't get to that stage in about a week. People in books got to it in about half a dozen pages. . . . And of course they'd meet at frequent intervals during the rest of their lives, for her to give him the comfort and sympathy he needed so badly. She'd go to all his plays, of course. She'd sit in the stage box and he'd address all his love speeches to her and people would wonder who was the pale sad woman dressed in black who always occupied the stage box.
... The girl's eyes grew misty as she contemplated the picture. . . .

He had handed his newspaper over to the woman. "There's a rather belated review of 'Heart Beats,'" he said.

The woman took it and read it through without relaxing the tightness of her lips.

"I don't agree with it at all," she said at last. "I thought you were peculiarly inadequate in the part."

The girl clenched her fists in impotent fury. . . . How dare she! . . . Inadequate. . . . He couldn't be inadequate in any part. . . . She threw a glance of anger at the woman, of burning sympathy at him. Unfortunately both were wasted, because neither of them was looking at her. . . . The man stood up and folded up his newspaper.

"Well?" he said. "Care to come out for a stroll?"

for a stron:

The woman shrugged her shoulders and rose too.

"I suppose we might as well," she said; "there doesn't seem to be anything else to do in this place."

They went slowly upstairs. The girl's gaze followed them. She must be quite firm about it like the girl in the play. "You belong to her . . ." she'd say and he would put his beautiful curly head on his hands just as he'd done in the play. . . . But her friendship would bring sunshine into his grey life. . . . She saw herself—the pale sad woman dressed in black sitting in the stage box and watching him every night (she did not stop to consider that in the circumstances a longish run might prove rather boring). It seemed quite absurd that she hadn't even spoken to him yet. . . . The phrase "So near and yet so far" came to her mind . . . strangers, yet bound by a link that was to unite them for eternity. The thought made the girl feel quite poetic. She'd once written an ode to a snowdrop for the school magazine, and everyone had said that it was very good. She decided to try her hand at something a little deeper when she got to her bedroom that night the sort of poem where "never" rhymes with "for ever" and "mate" with "fate" and "ruth" with "truth," and things like that. She was sure she could do it. . . . And perhaps in after years—say a hundred years hence—someone would quote it in the chapter of his biography entitled "His Secret Romance." Everyone would know about her, of course. She'd be almost as

famous as Shakespeare's "Dark Lady." After all, Shakespeare had been an actor too. . . . He came down with the unattractive woman, and they went through the lounge and out of the big swing-doors. attendant was just taking away the teathings.

"Was that Mr. Merridew?" asked the

girl.
"Yes, miss," said the attendant. The aunt went upstairs to have a treatment and the girl was alone in the lounge. Alone, that is, except for a boy who was sitting by the window pretending to read but watching her with patent admiration. Her blue eyes deepened with scorn as they met his. A boy. A mere boy. He looked as if he'd hardly left school. He probably regarded her-horrible thought—as his contemporary. Probably he didn't know that, though young in years, she was old in soul. He didn't know that she was destined to be the sunshine of Frank Merridew's grey life. . . . He blushed crimson on meeting her gaze, half smiled in a sheepish boyish fashion, stood up as if on an impulse and began to cross over the lounge in her direction. rose with exaggerated dignity, and, giving him a glance like ice from her blue eyes, turned and went slowly out of the lounge. He would surely realise his mistake now. He would see that she was no companion for his callow youth. She didn't know how very, very young she looked. . . .

She went upstairs and began on the poem. It was more difficult than she'd thought it was going to be. She couldn't find anything to rhyme with "love" except "above," and "above" wouldn't come into anything except "meeting above," which sounded like a hymn. So she gave it up and instead began to sew a chiffon flower on to the shoulder of her white evening dress. It was the dress she had worn when she had seen him in "Heart Beats." That was why she was going to wear it to-night. . . . She wondered if he'd know that it was the dress she'd worn when she saw him in "Heart Beats."...

It was, she thought, just her luck that the boy should emerge from a corridor and join her, sheepish and blushing, just as she reached the bottom of the stairs. HE was standing by the fireplace and her heart quickened fearfully at the thought that HE might think that she gave even a second's consideration to this terrible boy's attentions. It would be so dreadful if HE looked upon her as a mere schoolgirl, too young to understand or sympathise with him. She gave the boy another douche of blue ice and. without replying to his stammering and inadequate comment on the weather, swept before him into the lounge. HE was reading a letter and did not look up as she entered. That was disappointing. It was a perfect opportunity for the beginning of their friendship-no one in the lounge but themselves—(the boy, confused at his snub, had dived into the billiard-room, though he knew nothing about billiards and couldn't play for nuts)—and HE was reading a letter quite unconcernedly—just as if his soul-mate hadn't come into the room. And then-Fate intervened, as all the time she'd known in her heart that it would intervene, as it had intervened in all the love stories she'd ever read. She really didn't mean to knock the magazine off the table as she passed it, but she did. Quite accidentally she swept it on to the floor right at his feet. He stooped to pick it up and replace it. She said, "Î'm sorry." Their eyes met. He smiled. Her heart raced. She took courage and said breathlessly:

"I saw you in 'Heart Beats.'"

He said, "Did you?" He had an exquisitely beautiful voice.

She went on, "I thought you were wonderful-wonderful!"

He said, "I'm so glad." She said, "I suppose—I suppose you didn't see me there?"

It sounded a terrible thing to say. She felt dreadful when she'd said it. She simply couldn't think how she'd dared to say it. But he didn't seem to think it terrible. He just said, with his beautiful languid smile:

"It's-difficult to see the actual faces of your audience, you know, when you're on

But he didn't say he hadn't seen her there. She couldn't help noticing that.... Of course he'd been like that in "Heart Beats"; he'd tried not to let the girl see what he felt about her because he wanted her to feel free to love and marry someone of her own age. He'd said that he didn't want to fetter her bright youth—which the girl had thought so beautiful. No, she couldn't help noticing that he didn't actually say he hadn't seen her. . . .

She went on daringly, breathlessly: "It was so strange that the girl's name was Rosamund, because that's my name."

He fixed his eyes upon her. Frank Merridew's eyes were of such a shape and colour and set in his head in such a way that when he looked at people even in the most casual fashion he had the air of gazing at them soulfully. It was a trait that he found useful in his profession, but that he often found trying in private life. The girl thrilled to the very core of her being.

"Your name's Rosamund?" he said. "Yes," she answered, "Rosamund."

ever in evening dress, her lips tighter, her eyes harder, the set of her shoulders more instinct with obstinacy and ill-humour. She greeted him with some complaint, received his low-spoken and obviously peaceable rejoinder with a petulant shrug, and swept in front of him into the dining-room. The girl's heart bled for him. How terribly



She waited for a minute, then said, "Rose of the world, you know." She said it rather reproachfully, because of course it was what he ought to have said.

He said, "Of course," gave her another look that thrilled her to the very core of her being (he was wondering what time it was), then with a murmured apology he turned to the staircase. The woman was just coming down. She looked plainer than

he must have suffered all these years! yet her heart exulted for him too. worst of it was over for him now that they had found each other. Just then the terrible boy emerged from the billiard-room (where, having nothing else to do, he'd been tearing the leaves of a pull-off calendar that hung over the mantelpiece up to date; no one had touched it since January 1st) and asked her if she were going to dance that night. Coldly, absently, across hundreds of miles of space, without even looking at him, she answered that she wasn't and passed on upstairs before he could develop the conversation further. He must be made clearly to understand that she wasn't a mere girl, that she was a woman—aged and saddened by destiny—who had no interest in such

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puerilities as dancing. She met her aunt on the stairs and went down with her to the dining-room. Her aunt was very affable during dinner, and described her treatment and symptoms in great detail. The aunt's range of mental vision was bounded on all sides by her treatment and symptoms. Without her rheumatism she would have been like a lost creature in a strange world. But she had her rheumatism and was perfectly happy. The girl, of course, did not listen. She watched the man. He was sitting with his back to her so that she could not see his wonderful eyes. She could only see his hair -dark and curly, iron-grey at the temples. She had a terrible suspicion that the boy was gaping at her with his oaf-like gape of admiration from the table where he sat with his father and mother at the other side of the room—but she would not look to make sure. . . .

After dinner she saw a lot of young people go into another room for dancing and she heard faint strains of dance music, but she didn't go. She'd put all that sort of thing behind her. It belonged to her past and her youth. She'd read in more than one illustrated paper that Frank Merridew did not care for dancing. . . .

The evening was disappointing, considering that she was only at the hotel for a fortnight and that every minute was precious. They'd got on so nicely that afternoon that she'd hoped for great things from the evening, but nothing happened at all. He sat reading, the woman sat reading, the girl's aunt sat reading, and so the girl had to sit reading. Or rather pretending to read. The strains from the room where dancing was going on made her feel just a little wistful, but she conquered the feeling as unworthy of her great destiny as the sunshine of Frank Merridew's grey life.

Once, when she sneezed suddenly, he threw her one of the glances that thrilled her to the very core of her being, and then she didn't regret the dancing at all. . . .

By the next morning the girl had decided that things must be made to move a little faster. The girl in the play had been reading poetry to him by this time and telling him her deepest thoughts and feelings. girl in the play had read Keats to him. Rosamund didn't know much about Keats except that she'd once had to learn "Ode to a Nightingale" for English home-work, but she was sure that she could tell him her deepest thoughts and feelings. If he was sympathetic, as she was somehow sure he would be, she might even show him her "Ode to a Snowdrop." She had it with her somewhere.

There was a terrible moment in the morning when the boy asked her to play tennis and again HE passed through the lounge just as it was happening. Suppose he thought she liked the boy.... The very idea made her go hot all over. She tried to make her snub of the boy so conspicuous that no one for miles around could fail to see it. The boy plunged wildly into the billiard-room again, to tear furiously at the pull-off calendar. He tore off the little pages to December 31st and then flung the whole thing viciously into the waste-paper basket. That relieved his feelings slightly. But he felt no resentment at all against the girl. He considered her the Most Wonderful Girl in the World. His wrath was all against Fate for making him such that the Most Wonderful Girl in the World could feel nothing but scorn and loathing for him. . . .

Meantime the girl had wandered into the She carried a Keats under one arm, her "Ode to a Snowdrop" in her pocket and all her deepest thoughts and feelings in her mind. She'd seen HIM go alone into the garden and she found him sitting at the end of a seat reading a novel. sat down at the other end of the seat, and began to read Keats. It was delicious to be sitting like this near him reading Keats (she couldn't really understand Keats very well, but she knew that it was supposed to be beautiful). She wondered what he was thinking. He was probably feeling just -or almost just-as she was. He knew her as the girl whose eyes had met his across the stalls when he was playing in "Heart Beats," and whom he had known even then to be his soul-mate. . . .

He was watching her. She thrilled to the knowledge. He was looking with interest and something of surprise at her book. She looked up and met his gaze. He smiled.

"Poetry?" he said.
"Yes... Keats," she replied. wonderful, isn't it?"

And hastily began to read out loud. She

simply had to do that. The girl in the play had done it. And she mightn't get another opportunity. It wasn't quite such a success as she'd meant it to be. She had a horrible suspicion that he was looking amused. Moreover, she'd opened the volume of Keats at random, and she really didn't know what it was all about, and there were ever so many words she'd never met before and couldn't pronounce. So she soon gave up that and went on to tell him of her deepest thoughts and feelings. He was quite nice about her deepest thoughts and feelings. He threw her several of the glances that thrilled her to the very core of her being, and he said "Yes, I understand" at all the right places. Then, when she thought they'd reached the right stage of intimacy, she showed him her "Ode to a Snowdrop." It did slightlyonly very slightly—spoil it that he had to hunt so long for his spectacles before he could read it, but he said "Very nice" at the end when he handed it back to her. Then she told him how wonderful she thought he was and that in her opinion he was the finest actor in the world. He thanked her and smothered several yawns with a skill born of long practice. When the aunt appeared from her treatment to recount with zest the latest symptoms, the girl went to her reluctantly and yet with an inward glow of happiness. The morning had been amazingly successful. She felt so completely his friend and confidante, the pale sad lady in the stage box, that it was almost unbelievable that they had only met the day before. But it was always like that with soul-mates, of course. How nice he'd been about her deepest thoughts and feelings. And about her "Ode to a Snowdrop." They hadn't mentioned the objectionable wife, of course, but he had been just like that in the play -very, very loyal to the objectionable wife. ... Her heart was singing as she went upstairs with her aunt. She wasn't listening to her aunt's lyrical descriptions of her morning's medical bath. She was seeing herself years hence—the pale sad lady—talking to him and saying, "Do you remember that first afternoon at the hotel-that afternoon when we first got to know each other?" And he'd say, "We always knew each other. Before Time was we knew each other." Or else, "Yes, of course I remem-How could I ever forget?" And she'd say, "I showed you that silly little poem I'd written." And he'd say, "It was wonderful-wonderful." (After all, everyone at school did think it wonderful, so probably

he did too.) And she'd say, "I showed it to you because I knew you'd understand." And he'd say, "You were wearing an adorable green jumper suit. I shall always see you as I saw you that day."

"It's all black like mud," said the aunt enthusiastically; "and the heat's tremendous. You've no idea how it makes one

perspire."

"How wonderful!" said the girl absently. He was alone at lunch. Probably the objectionable wife was having lunch upstairs. The girl knew, of course, from the play that the objectionable wife made terrible scenes in private and sulked for hours. Probably she'd just made a terrible scene and was now sulking. The girl gazed ardently at the shapely back of his curly head, and her heart bled for him. . . .

She didn't see him during the afternoon. She hung about waiting for him and avoiding the terrible boy, who was obviously going to risk another snub and ask her to play tennis (she'd decided to give up tennis; HE didn't play tennis), but he never came. Probably he was trying to propitiate the terrible wife. Perhaps the terrible wife had seen him talking to her in the morning and was jealous. She must be very careful, the girl decided solemnly. She mustn't make things harder for him. . . .

At tea-time the girl came in to tea with her aunt and looked about for him as usual. She thought at first that he wasn't there. Then she saw him. He was having tea by the fireplace with the most beautiful woman the girl had ever seen in her life. For a moment the sight stupefied her. Then she reassured herself. It must be his sister. It must be his sister. It must be his sister. The girl refused to contemplate any other explanation. And even that explanation was rather depressing, though the girl couldn't exactly have said why. He hadn't had a sister in the play. . . . The aunt was still talking about her baths.

"I find them awfully exhausting," she said, "afterwards."

She was surprised and flattered at the concern and dismay on the girl's face as, still gazing at the actor, she murmured mechanically "How terrible." The aunt thought she must have misjudged the girl. She'd often thought that she wasn't as sympathetic as she might have been about her treatment and symptoms. Her heart quite warmed to her. . . .

"They're soothing in a way while you're having them," she went on expansively,

"but they make you feel limp. Afterwards."
But the girl had ceased to be adequate.
She made no comment at all. She was gazing open-eyed with horror at the actor. She had caught a sentence from a table just near her.

description of her feelings at each stage of the treatment. The girl was still gazing at the actor and his companion. They seemed to be getting on very well together. . . . They weren't taking any notice of anyone else. It was extremely hard to imagine that



"'I say,' said the boy, with a determination worthy of his race, 'you wouldn't care to come and make a four at tennis, would you?'"

"Yes, isn't she beautiful? She's his wife. She's just arrived."

Desperately the girl looked about her for some other couple to whom the remark might apply, but there wasn't one. Besides, the people who said it were looking straight at the actor. . . . The aunt was giving a vivid

he was aware of her, the girl, just near him, and thinking of their wonderful afternoon. After tea she approached a waiter and said to him casually:

"Is that Mr. Merridew's wife who's just arrived?"

And the waiter, who was less haughty

than the one she'd accosted before, said in quite a friendly fashion:

"Yes, miss. She's his wife. Came this

afternoon."

"I thought the other—"

"Oh no, miss. She was an aunt or some such relative."

The girl wandered into the garden and sat down on a garden seat. She wanted to be alone. But she wasn't quite alone. There was another seat on the other side of the thick hedge and through it she could hear two voices. One was a woman's voice —a sweet laughing voice. The other was— HIS.

"So you've had a horrible time, my poor darling?" said the sweet laughing voice.

You always take care to be away for it. anvwav."

"But she went this morning, my sweet, so

you've had a peaceful day."

"I haven't," he said emphatically. "I've had a terrible day. I—

A sweet gurgle of laughter.

"Darling, you haven't had one of your little matinée adorers after you, have you?"

"I have," he groaned. "It was terrible. For the whole morning. She read poetry to me."

Again the sweet gurgle of laughter.

"Which one was it? Was she in the lounge while we were having tea?"

"I don't know. I can only tell you that



"Damnable!" he replied. "I don't think my venerable aunt-by-marriage has ever been so trying."

"But it's only for one week in the year," laughed the sweet voice, "and you stand in solitary glory in her will. So surely it's worth it.

"I suppose it is," he said ruefully. "It doesn't seem so during the week, though. she was wearing something green this morning."

'She was in the lounge, then. She's

adorably pretty."

"They're always adorably pretty, but it doesn't make them any more endurable."

The girl got up and went quickly indoors. How bare and bleak and barren and unsatisfying real life was. Not a bit like a play. . . . At the door she ran

into the boy.

to," she said.

"I say," said the boy, with a determination worthy of his race, "you wouldn't care to come and make a four at tennis, would you?"

And suddenly an amazing thing happened. The boy ceased to be terrible and unattractive to the girl. He became suddenly handsome and beautifully mannered and charming. Tennis... she was simply longing for a game of tennis... And dancing... She was itching to dance. She'd dance to-night. With the boy. He looked awfully nice. Most frightfully nice. She smiled and dimpled adorably. "I'd love

The boy's face flamed with pleasure. She

flushed softly too.

The actor and his wife came in through the open door. And then another amazing thing happened. The actor suddenly became an old man. Well, almost old. Old enough to be quite negligible. Grey hair at his temples. Quite grey. How on earth had she ever——?

"And dancing to-night?" went on the

boy daringly. "You'll come?"

"Oh, rather," she said happily.
She felt suddenly light-hearted and happy.
Real life was really ever so much jollier than a stuffy old play, after all.

"I'll just run up and change," she said.

She ran lightly upstairs, three steps at a time.

THE YOKEL.

THEY told I sich tales o' London,
I don't believe 'em true.

They sed the place is so crowded,
At times you can scarce git throo.

They sed that there's thousands o' shops there,
And things you can go to, free.

And millions on millions o' people;

—Why don't I go up and zee?

They told I about a circus,
I believe 'twas a zoo they sed,
And in cages are furrin crittures,
Sich as might bite off yer head.
And about a walking staircase,
'Ull switch you high as can be;
I bain't taking in they stories,
But I think I'll go up and zee.

They told I the pavements be golden,
That there's lions in 'Falgar Square,
Which 'ull git up and roar right at you,
If they see you at 'em stare.
Well, they bain't stuffing I wi' them yarns,
Fur I know sich things can't be;
But I've thought the matter over,
And—I be going up to zee.



"'Go and bathe yer head in th' Liffey,' says Tim, 'and get the swelling down.'"

PRIDE OF THE RING

By ANDREW SOUTAR

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM PEDDIE

HIS is the tale of Terry McCully, the fighter, as it was told to me in the smoke-ridden parlour of the Tavern of the Broken Tooth. It is a modern tale, for McCully was one of the boys that went through the blood and sweat of Flanders, with a mud-choked rifle handy to his reach but greater faith in the smiting power of his fists. McCully was reared within the environs of "dear ould dirty Dublin," but back along his line, of which he knew nothing, there had been McCullys who drank in the company of "Corinthians" and fought for their patrons with a loyalty that staggered along to death rather than dishonour.

Very proud of his country and its history of ring-fighters was the man who told the tale: and he told it with the faintest brogue

that carried it along as music carries men on the march. Now and then, but not often, he slipped into a colloquialism that made the pedantic phrase a thing to be ashamed of.

Light, middle, then heavy-weight, said he, as he stretched his broad back to the flames and clasped his hands behind him, McCully went through his classes like the good bhoy he was. Quick on his feet as a leopard he was, wid a punch in both hands that would have knocked a hole through the side of a battleship. There was never a finer exponent of the one-two punch than that same McCully: left lead to the head and a right to the body with not the tick of an ould clock in between the blows. Head weaving like it was the head of a snake or a weasel

turning over on its back to make its upward strike at the rabbit. Muscles rippling like the face of a river wid a breeze against the tide. Eyes shining like a tiger's when the lust of blood is on it.

Then came the night when he took the count! And for him the Vault of Heaven was split and scorn poured down like rain in November. It was the night that McCully tried to come back, as they say in the language of the ring. For he had fallen from his high estate long before that fight. The little woman, Kate O'Harra, was the cause of that fall, for to McCully she had said as she rested her cheek against his: "'Tis me or this fighting that ye've got to stand by. My heart's not in it, Terry me darlint."

So he gave up the fighting, for he loved her wid the passion the flowers love the sun. And the managers cussed him for a fool, for they said he might have touched the form of a champion if he had stayed in the

game.

He took a job in the blast-furnace, flinging shovelfuls of coal into the fires when he ought to have been flinging his fists into a man's face and body. They paid him but two pounds a week when he might have been reaching out a hand for a couple of hundred after a ten-round fight.

But he had Kitty! And that was worth it all, said he.

The heat of the furnace sucked the strength out of him, so it did. The glare of the fires bit into his eyes—eyes that used to see a man's intentions a second before he drew back his glove to strike. Sometimes, when the fans were going, and blowing the fires into flame, he fancied he heard the roar of the audience like they used to roar when he had his man "going" wid his knees sagging and his eyes asquint like a Chinyman's. That roar was as sweet to his soul as the pattering of rain to the parched corn, so it was. "Go in, McCully, an' finish him!" Then would be measure his man by houlding the left glove to the tip of the chin and fetching his right over wid a snap. maybe he'd cry like a kid when the other fellow went down. And he'd help him up —lift him up in his arms when the referee had said "Enough," or the timekeeper had spun out the ten seconds. And he'd pat him on the shoulder when he came round and say, "You're a good bhoy, but th' luck was agin ye."

That was McCully. Good lad, McCully! And he married Kitty who didn't have the heart for fighting but just loved to sit by the

fire o' nights and talk of the babe that was lying close to her heart.

Now, the memory of the sporting public is as short as a workman's holiday. McCully was forgotten and the newspapers that used to tell the public when his hat blew off in a high wind couldn't have found a photygraph of him if he'd died and left half-a-million to a thieves' club. Shure! That's the way of the world. Ye've got to keep in the limelight or go to sleep in the shadows.

McCully's little wife, Kitty, fell sick and there was a greater sickness to come before she'd get well. And down at the blastfurnace they had a run of bad luck, so they had, and reduced the pay of Terry McCully by as much as ten shillings a week.

And the doctor said to Terry: "It'll cost ye twenty pounds to see her safely through."

And the priest (a fine man was Father

Flanigan) said to him:

"Put your guts into it, me lad; she's worth more than twenty pounds. Ye big, mutton-fed baby!"

And McCully said to himself: "She's worth twenty thousand to me, but how can I get it?" His was the only logical survey of the situation. The doctors tell ye "oysters" are the medicine and ye haven't the price of cockles.

For two or three weeks McCully fasted as though every day was a Saint's day. And he fed the little woman wid all the delicacies that a woman in her condition craves in times like these. And when he'd fed her wid all he'd been able to buy and lied to her—the scoundrel!—saying he'd fed like a fighting-cock in the next room when not so much as a bone of a bloater had passed his lips, she'd clasp her arms around his neck and say: "Terry, me man, it's grateful to God I am for having you to be my husband." And Terry would say no more than this: "I'd fight for ye, Kitty, until there wasn't a punch left in me."

The job of getting twenty pounds together wouldn't keep a financier from his sleep, but to a prize-fighter who has been out of the public eye for a while after disappointing a manager and maybe a few promoters it's a divvle of a task. Terry knew he had to get the money if he loved her, and he knew that the only way to get it was to fight for it.

Mother o' mine, did ye ever hear of anything so crazy as an under-fed, untrained ex-pugilist looking around for a backer and saying he would like to take the ring against the best at his weight?

Tim Sullivan, who ran the Arena, laughed

in Terry's face when he was asked for a fight. "You fight!" said he as he looked at the sorry wreck of a man (for, I'm telling ye that the blast had walloped most of the life out of the lad). "Ye couldn't knock a sick kid out of a p'rambulator," says Tim, adding, by way of compensation: "Now there was a time when you could have filled a big house. Get ye back to the blast," says he, "and larn to handle yer shovel as ye'll have to handle it when they've closed yer eyes wid a couple of pennies."

Now, there's a trait in the character of your best fighters that's as fine as anything the priest has ever spoken about. It isn't always the end of the purse he's thinking about when he rubs his pumps in the resin and waits for the gong to send him to the centre of the ring. Sometimes—many times—generally—it's the pride he takes in his profession. So it was wid Terry McCully. "Winner can take all," says he to Tim Sullivan. "An' I'll fight the best ye can put in the ring."

"Go and bathe yer head in th' Liffey," says Tim, "and get the swelling down." But as he was turning away from the lad he saw something in his eye that reminded him of his own boy when he came back from his wanderings and was too proud to ask for the price of a meal. So he gave Terry a pat on the shoulder and he said: "No, boy, ye couldn't do it. If I put ye up agin one of the cheap lads he'd paste ye, mebbe, and all that ye've done in the past would be ruined, so it would." He slipped a pound note into Terry's hand and left the lad staring at it through a screen of tears.

Terry McCully, best at his weight not long before, taking charity from such as Tim Sullivan!

He went home to Kitty and sat wid her until she fell asleep. The ould clock on the mantelshelf ticked away as though it knew it was the only thing in the house that was paid for. "Tick-tock—twenty pounds!" That was the chanting that played the very divvle wid Terry's nerves.

He went again to see Tim Sullivan. And Tim was as mad as a red-eyed cat after it's been chased by a couple of terriers. The big fight he'd promoted between Dan Hogan, the coming champion, and a fellow from South Wales who had been shouted in the 'papers, couldn't go through for the Welshman had fallen sick of the palsy, or the backache, or the toothache. Tim had to get a substitute, and be pretty smart about it.

"I'd like to fight Hogan," said Terry. "He was my sparring partner two years ago. I paid him a couple of quid a week for th' job."

"Ye poor fish," said Tim Sullivan.
"Hogan will be the British Heavyweight

Champion inside twelve months."

And Terry McCully said nothin' to that, for he couldn't trust himself to speak. His pride was hurt and there'd be a shake in his voice if he reminded Tim Sullivan that not so long ago Tim had been proud to walk by his side.

And Tim saw again that look in the lad's eye that appealed to the sentiment in him.

"Pity ye married," he said. "There was a future for ye that would have made the ghost of th' last king of Ireland sick wid envy. So it would."

"'Tis not yer pity I'm asking for," said Terry, like the loyal lad he was. "I'm

asking for a fight."

Tim jerked his head back in contempt.

"And ye've trained in the blast," said he, and spat. "Divvle a bit o' colour is there in yer cheeks and no snap to your eyes. Ye've fed on tinned fish and kisses and Hogan would hit ye just once and I'd have the pollis afther me for allowin' murther. Get ye home, Terry, and forget that ye were ever a fighter."

"There's a kid comin'," said Terry wid a little tremble in his voice, "and it's twenty pounds I'm needing. Gimme a fight wid

Hogan."

Now, that Tim Sullivan was never made to fix fights: there was a soft spot in his heart that would have made a fine priest of him.

"Come to see me to-morrow night," said he. And as Terry was backing out of the room the big-hearted fellow said: "Look here, Terry me lad, I can't afford twenty pounds, but if a fiver's any use to you I'm the man to spring it."

"Keep your fiver," said Terry McCully.
"It isn't charity I'm seeking for the kid: I want to earn it. Nice thing for the bhoys to be telling it when I'm gone that Terry McCully had to go out and beg for it.

Gimme a fight, Tim Sullivan."

And, shure, Tim did. He was in sore trouble because the big scrap couldn't be brought off, but he knew the patrons of his hall would forgive him if he put up a substitute and pulled down his prices. It was when he announced on the placards that Hogan would fight ten rounds wid Terry McCully rather than disappoint his followers

by not showing himself—it was when he did that widdout a blush that they hurled laughter at him. Was he flinging poor

Terry to the lions?

"Twenty pounds ye shall have if ye weather three rounds," he said to the lad, "but if Hogan forgets to pull his punch and knocks off that red head of yours, don't expect me to pay the funeral expenses."

"I don't ask Hogan to pull any punch," said Terry. "I'll take all he can sling at

me."

He went home a happy man and he talked to Kitty about "a little bit of extra work he was going to do for a friend after he'd left the blast of a night." She was satisfied wid that, the time being near for her to travel along the Valley; she paid no heed to the sound of stockinged feet sliding across the floor of the next room where Terry was doing a little shadow boxing to work up his speed. And when he went out in the dark for a run along the roads he wore an old overcoat over his shorts so's she wouldn't even guess what that "extra bit of work" amounted to: then he'd hide the overcoat in an outhouse and swing away on his lonesome.

Twenty pounds! Tim Sullivan was to pay him twenty pounds if he lasted three

rounds!

The doctor called to see Kitty on the afternoon of the day fixed for the fight, and Terry whispered to him that there was no pressing need to tell her of what was to happen in Tim Sullivan's hall that night.

"My ould mother will come around and sit wid her while I'm away," said he, "and I'll be back before eleven."

"Ye'll be a father by that time," said the doctor. "It's a game lad you are.

get a pasting, so ye will."

"It's the money I want," said Terry, "and if Hogan can give me a pasting along wid Tim's money he's a better lad than I take him to be.

When the time was come for him to set out for the hall he bent over the bed and kissed Kitty on the lips and the cheeks.

"It's a brave woman ye are, Kitty," said

"No braver than Terry McCully," said she. "Go to your work and leave me to get on wid mine.'

Now, Dan Hogan was a fine, upstanding fellow and as fit as a trainer's hands could make him. He'd been preparing for the match wid the Welshman and was ready to fight for a kingdom as the 'papers say. had laughed sneeringly when Tim Sullivan

told him of the substitute he had en-

"Don't ye hurt th' lad too much," said "He's done no training to speak of and is as soft in the body as a cat's stomach."

"I'll just play wid him," said Hogan. But back of his mind there was a memory of a hiding Terry had given him when he was sparring partner to him: that was long before Terry took up his job at the blast. Hogan told himself that he would batter th' lad so that his mother would be ashamed to acknowledge the relationship.

There was a big crowd gathered in Tim Sullivan's hall on the night of the fight. Somehow the boxing "fan" takes kindly to a lad that's trying to come back, as they say, whiles champions don't get much sympathy.

There was a roar like a river going over the weir when Terry's form showed itself coming from the dressing-room. That face of his was white—white as a miller's—but there was fine courage in his big eyes. He came down the aisle with a pathetic smile on his face and an ould overcoat flung over his shoulders instead of the dressing-gown he used to sport when he was a flower of the ring.

They gave him a fine welcome.

"Terry, me darlint, belt him in the slats," yelled one. "Show's yer ould form, me lad," yelled another. Yes, they remembered the battles the bhoy had put up in that very hall, and although it was only a makeshift fight they had paid their money to see, they seemed to have the notion that there was a drama behind it all that would stir them to their boots before it was through.

Twenty pounds if he stood up for three rounds!

He was thinking about that offer of Tim Sullivan's as he sat in his corner and awaited the arrival of Hogan. Tim had given him a couple of ould seconds attached to his business: Hogan had his own. The arc lamps flickered and spluttered same as they were hissing the red-headed lad; then, when Hogan came down the aisle wearing a gown that would have tickled a nabob to death, those same lights straightened themselves out and stared in homage at the big fellow.

Hogan gave Terry a nod as he passed him on his way to his corner, but he said to one of his seconds in a voice loud enough for Terry to hear: "About a couple of rounds, I s'pose." That was to unnerve the lad who had been his master in the ould days.

Terry said never a word to his seconds. He sat back in his corner and talked to Kitty who was sitting up yonder on the rafters and looking down on him wid compassion in her eyes. And in her arms was a bundle of wool wid a pink face no bigger than a clam shell.

"Seconds out," said Haggerty the timekeeper, and there was a hush as the lads went from their corners.

Hogan led wid his left: Terry always let the other man lead to find out just how snappy he was wid that hand. He slipped the lead and countered with a hard punch to Hogan's middle, then dropped into a clinch as neatly as a cog dropping into its segment. Break! And Terry came away with all the old sprightliness, standing up on his toes like a ballet dancer. "Hurroo!" yelled the "fans." "That's the ould Terry McCully!" Hogan went after him, working him into a corner, head down, gloves scything bits out of the atmosphere. Into the corner! Terry tried hard to keep away from it because he knew he couldn't stand much close work, not having trained as in the ould days. He tried to side-step out of his trouble, but Hogan swung a wicked left to his ribs, and coming closer jabbed him hard in the region of the heart. Terry tried to clinch again, but Hogan, who was as strong as neat rum, wouldn't have it; he pushed him away and gave him some of the nastiest wrist jabs he could put over.

Terry laughed, but he didn't feel like laughing. He stepped out lively, danced and pranced, big lad though he was, and his eyes were staring hard into Hogan's.

"Box him, Terry," yelled a fellow in the gallery as Hogan went in close, his hands going like pistons.

Terry tried a left lead to the jaw. Oh, man, it was a beauty! Like the tongue of a snake shooting out. Straight to the point!

"That's ould Terry," the crowd yelped. But it wasn't. Hogan did no more than grin. And Terry's heart was made sick. He knew that the ould punch was missing. That blow should have given Hogan a pain: it did no more than make him laugh. If you fall out of training for a spell it's the weight of your punch that goes back on you. Many a time had Terry dropped his man wid a punch that travelled no more than four inches: but there was "body" behind it in those days. Again, he tried the left to the point and connected so perfectly that the house rose to its feet expecting to see Hogan go down. Not he. He rushed the lad, taking chances that no champion would dream of taking unless he was fighting a oneeyed cobbler from Connemara. Right and left he smashed at Terry's ribs, and it was the striking of the gong and the end of the round that saved him.

He slithered back to his corner like he was drunk. Hogan walked jauntily and talked wid his seconds as they ran the sponge and their hands over him.

Terry listened to his seconds, but he couldn't catch all they were saying. It was the voice of Kitty that filled his ears. "And when they've made ye foreman at the blast," she was saying, "we'll save for th' hollyday by the sea. And Terry, me man, there'll be another wid us by then."

The second who was massaging his stomach said to him: "Hogan's mighty strong. Keep away from him if ye want to stand up three rounds. He'll wear you down if you go in for in-fightin'. Show him some of the ould stuff. Give him the one-two and get away and for the love of mike keep one eye on me and do what I signal."

They shoved him up for the second round, but they said among themselves that it was like sending him to his death. Hogan had marked him pretty badly. One eye was closing and there was a red pattern painted on his hide. Hogan was in the know about that three rounds for twenty pounds and he said to his seconds that sooner than let the lad pick it up he'd fling the ring-posts at him.

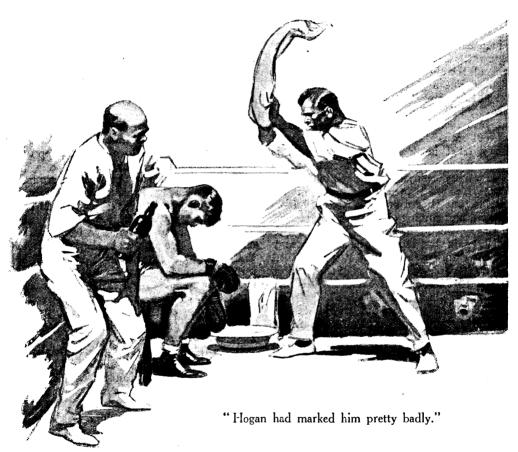
As they came together for that second round Hogan said to him: "Now, ye big red-headed pup, I'm goin' to make ye fight." That was to provoke him.

Down from the rafters came the voice of Kitty: "Box him, Terry me man. There's no beef in ye and ye cannot afford to rough it. Give him wan for me and wan for the kid!"

Did he? Oh, if ye could read the tales the 'papers printed about that second round! The ould gladiator found himself. He sailed in wid th' speed of a featherweight, sailed in on his toes, his chin well down on his shoulder, his right glove moving like a snake's head. Snap! And he had Hogan on the chin, again. There was greater strength behind that punch. Down went Hogan! The house pushed up its roof to let the shouts get out. "Get back," says the referee to Terry. He stepped back and rested his tired arms on the ropes. He didn't think that Hogan could recover from that punch before the ten was counted. But he did. "Go in," yelled Terry's seconds. "Go in and finish him." Terry slid in, much against his better judgment, and Hogan met him with a hit to the mark that took the wind out of him and spread his lips in a search for air. He managed to turn over and get to his knees. He could hear the people shouting, for that is the way of the punch to the mark: ye can hear all that is happening around ye but you can't get to your feet. Kitty, Kitty! Lord, Kitty, there was twenty pounds at stake! He got to his feet. Hogan, the mankiller, went in

down from the rafters and put out the light so's he might get his wind.

He had groped his way back to his corner. The "fans" had struck matches and were holdin 'em up above their heads. And electric torches were fetched from nowhere and the electricians rushed in and before five minutes had gone the lights were glaring again. And so was Terry. He had tasted the blood of victory, as ye might say.



to finish him. Terry saw the right coming across to his chin, but he hadn't the strength to duck it or fling up a guard. It was coming like a mountain being flung at him. If only he had trained another day or two, or fed his muscles wid something more sustaining than porridge and baked beans!

And somethin' happened. The arc lamps went out. The hall was in darkness. The voice of Tim Sullivan bellowed through the hall:

"'Tis only a fuse gone," shouted Tim, but Terry knew it was Kitty who had leaned Then came the third round. Hogan said to the men in his corner: "I'll hit him that far ye'll not find him to-morrow."

"Pile your weight on him, Hogan," said thev.

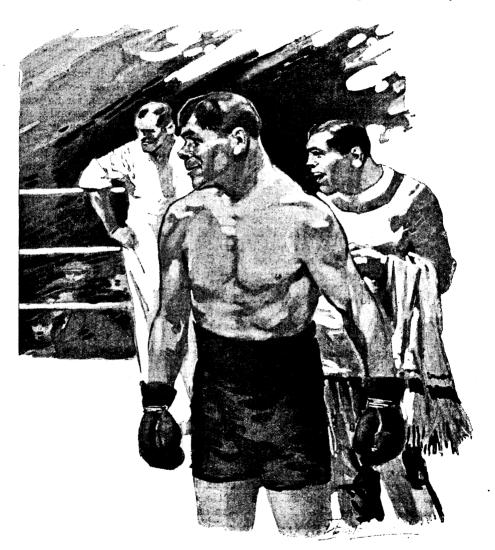
"I will," said he. "For he hasn't the strength of a consumptive louse."

And he went in to slay the lad wid short arm jabs to the stomach and hooks to the head. It was the third round and there was a matter of twenty pounds in the balance, and Kitty, sitting on the rafters, was calling to Terry: "Hold up, boy, and get through the three rounds. Then we're safe and the

doctor's bill is paid and the nurse's and we're in clover. And we'll away to the seaside when they've made ye foreman of the blast."

One eye closed! But he was a prince at the game of fighting. He slipped and ducked and hammered Hogan until the big fellow looked as though he were a sacrifice to the Gods. The twenty pounds was hooked at the head: he couldn't understand why the lad didn't go down. And then he realised that if he didn't do somethin' shady, Terry would have him out, for his own strength was going.

Now, there is one move in boxing that is dirty and dangerous. It isn't practised by men who love the sport: it's used by those



rustling in Terry's hand. He could hear the doctor saying: "Thank you, Mister McCully. And I'm proud to know that ye beat Dan Hogan." He could hear Kitty saying... Oh, what was she saying? How could he tell her the truth? For she hated this fighting game.

Hogan came in to make it a rough-house, as they say. He punched at the ribs, he

who know the game is going against them.

Listen to this carefully.

You let the other man lead to the head wid the left. You slip that lead by moving your head to the left. At the same time ye step forward an inch or two wid your right foot. That brings ye standing wid your right side turned to the stomach of your man. Quick as lightning ye smash a glancing blow

at his plexus-right on the mark! Ye carry through like you meant to turn your back on him, then you spin back, as it might be, turning again to the forward position and bringing the knuckle of your glove to the same spot that ye hit as you carried through. 'Tis a fancy blow and perfectly fair if you play it straight, But if he has worked his man into the blind eye of the referee, the blackguard carries through, as you've heard, then brings his elbow back into the plexus. Oh, 'tis a sorry blow a man can inflict wid just that trick.

And Hogan played that trick, so he did. There was a time when Terry McCully could have taken a score of those same punches, but not on this night-no, not on this night. Down he went wid his mouth spread and the agony in his eyes was pitiful to see. He knew the blow was unfair, but the referee hadn't seen it, and Terry was not the bhoy to squeal if the referee was against

him.

The time-keeper was counting: "Six, seven, eight . . ." Then the gong went for the end of the round! Terry was saved so far as his twenty pounds was concerned, because he had weathered three rounds, but they couldn't pull him together to send him for the fourth, and the referee held up the arm of Dan Hogan to proclaim him the winner.

Terry McCully got back his strength before Hogan could leave the ring. There was a flame in his eyes that no man had seen Somebody in the crowd was laughing at the fall of the man who had once touched championship form and had taken the count at the end of three rounds wid a fellow who had been no more than his sparring partner.

The pride of the boy was sorely hurt. He knew that blow was unfair, but that wasn't the protest he was going to make. He got to his feet—the game lad !—and he staggered to the centre of the ring, holding up his right hand to ask the people for silence.

"Spit, Terry," said one. And there came

a silence.

"I challenge Hogan to another fight,"

said Terry.

The roar of laughter brought the blood to the cheeks of the lad and he bit on his lower

lip.
"Yes," said he, "for twenty pounds a side, winner take all." And he looked towards his corner, where Tim Sullivan was standing wid his chin resting on the canvas of the ring.

"Who's yer backer?" somebody shouted.

"I got me own money," said Terry, and again he looked at Tim Sullivan.

Hogan laughed like he was sorry for the lad, and climbed through the ropes.

Terry went back to his corner and let his chief second swing the ould overcoat over his shoulders. Tim Sullivan helped him through the ropes.

"Get ye home to Kitty," said he, and pushed twenty pounds in paper into his hand. "Wad ve waste all that money and

her wanting it badly?"

Terry said not a word, but went up the aisle and along to his dressing-room. There, they tried to comfort him, for he was distressed. They left him to put on his clothes because there was another bout going on in the ring. He sat wid his head in his hands for a while, then the pain of defeat and the disgrace of having lost became too much for him. He rushed out of his dressing-room and made his way to Hogan's.

Now, Hogan was lying back on a camp bed that was like a couch, and he was laughing wid his seconds when Terry pushed open

the door.

"Get up, ye big 'harp,'" said Terry, and fight me fair.

"Throw him out," said Hogan to his

"Fight me here," said Terry. "Fight me in this dam' room and I'll teach ye how to box—and fight."

"Lose yerself," said Hogan. "Ye tire

And Terry strode up to him at that and fetched him a slap across the cheek.

"Now, ye fouler," he said, "fight. I'll back myself for twenty pounds. money's here-in my fist." And he showed the twenty pounds that Tim Sullivan had given him for his job that night—the money that was needed to help the little 'un to come into the world.

Hogan scrambled off the bed and there

was an ugly look in his eyes.

"Where shall I hit him?" said he to his friends.

"Ah, take the money," said one. deserves to lose it, anyway."

And down went Terry's money on the bed where it could be picked up if Hogan should drop him for the count.

They fought—there, in that small dressingroom, wid nobody to shout but the friends of Hogan.

'Twas a great fight and there was only one man in it. And that was Terry McCully. Every trick he had learned at the trade he brought into play. He slammed Dan Hogan like he was punching the bag in the gymnasium. He hit him right and left: he sent him down three times in the first two minutes: he closed his left eye: he taught

reached him: then wid an awful right cross to the heart he sent the big hulk crashing on the floor.

Terry had won! If only he could have fought like that a little while before!

Hogan's friends brought him round and



"'I've been watching that scrap from the doorway,' he said, 'and if Dan Hogan doesn't cover that twenty of Terry's he gets no more fights in my place.'"

him how to box and how to fight. Out of the past came all the strength he used to joy in. Once Hogan tried to rush him, hoping to fling the whole of his weight on him and bear him down. Terry stepped aside a fraction of a second before Hogan propped him on the bed, and he looked at Terry wid the one eye that was good. "Ye can fight," said he, "but ye get no twenty pounds out of me."

And the others would have flung the lad out of the room and grabbed his

own stake if Tim Sullivan hadn't spoke

"I've been watching that scrap from the doorway," he said, "and if Dan Hogan doesn't cover that twenty of Terry's he gets no more fights in my place. And what's more," said he, "if he'd like another match wid Terry McCully he can have wan. And what's more than that, I'll put up a purse of a hundred of the best, winner to take all. Are ye for it, Terry McCully?"

And Terry gathered up the forty pounds —his stake and that of Dan Hogan. wiped away the trickle of blood that was on his lips and sort of smiled through the eye that wasn't closed by the fight in the ring.

"Thank ye, Tim," said he, "but I'm done wid th' fighting game. Ye see, Kitty doesn't

like it."

"Terry, me bhoy," said Tim Sullivan, " let me have ye trained at my own expense."

Terry shook his head.

"I'm back at the blast, to-morrow," said Then he went over to Hogan and held out his hand. "Say that I'm your master," said he.

"Ye are," said Hogan, for he didn't like the way that Terry was carrying his left fist.

And wid that, Terry shook hands all round and went back to his dressing-room. He pulled the ould overcoat over his shoulders and set out for home. There was a big singing in his heart, and he held his head high as a man should who has vindicated himself.

The doctor was smoking a pipe downstairs when he reached the house.

"How goes it?" said he.

"You ask Tim Sullivan," said Terry, and showed him the handful of bank-notes.

"I knew you could beat him," said the doctor. "Now come along upstairs and have a squint at Terry the Second. He's the finest youngster I've helped to bring into the world for many a moon."

And Terry went quietly up the stairs to where Kitty was lying wid a bundle of wool pressed close to her heart. And, as he bent over the bed, Terry said:

"It's a brave woman ye are, Kitty,

darlint."

"No braver than you, Terry me man," said she.

And she pulled aside the wrappings of wool and let him peep at the tiny thing she was

hugging to her.

Terry blinked like a cat in the sunlight. And there were tears in his eyes as he smiled. Then he went back down the stairs wid the doctor, for the nurse said she would hammer the life out of him if he stayed another minute, so she would. And he sat wid the doctor for an hour and yarned about the fights he had fought in the days gone by. And they had a tiny drop of somethin' from the doctor's flask, and—and Terry said:

"Doctor, life's wonderful when ye put yer

heart into it. What?"

"Shure," said the doctor, putting back into his pocket the empty flask.

BARNABAS. A SPANIEL. TO

 $\mathbf{V}^{ ext{OU}}$ gaze at me with eyes of limpid brown, Expressive eyes that keep assuring me Of your unchanging love and loyalty; A faithful friend, who will not "let me down," You droop your plumy tail the while I frown, But when I smile you instantly agree That life is good, you laugh right merrily And, like a puppy, gaily play the clown.

And once, when sad at heart I stood alone, Your sympathy was practical and sweet: You disinterred a greatly cherished bone And laid the muddy offering at my feet. Thank you, my friend, you make my moods your own, Our mutual understanding is complete.

LESLIE M. OYLER.

MR. BUFFUM DECIDES TO HAVE NO NONSENSE

By HUGH DE SÉLINCOURT

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

R. BUFFUM was very hurt to receive a curt telegram from Niece Lucia on the afternoon of a Friday in July, when he was expecting her for the week-end, to say that she was unavoidably prevented from coming. She might at least have 'phoned. No reason was given. These modern manners. . . . Some young man claimed her . . . might at least tell him . . . he'd mind in a way. But his minding would depend upon how her engagement caused her to treat him.

The curtness was quite unlike her. And no explanatory letter came. Oh, well, it had been very pleasant when it had suited her book to come. He was a foolish old man to have allowed it to mean so much to him: to have been lured, for an instant, from his own elderly ways. As a novelty he'd been some fun; the novelty was wearing off.

On Saturday morning he overheard Eliza inform Monnie's mother that the Governor's harness didn't fit him: and he wished that people were not so horribly observant.

He passed the telephone in the hall and realised that it would be sensible to ring up Niece Lucia and ask her why she wasn't coming, if he wanted to know. "Sensible! That!" Something snorted within him. "And be snubbed for inquisitiveness about her affairs." No. No. He wagged a sagacious head.

He wandered, however, into the kitchen and told Eliza that he was upset at not hearing why Miss Lucia could not come.

Eliza pondered, looking at him. "Something wrong, I'm afraid." "Wrong! What could there be wrong?" "I hope there's not, from my heart.

"Chance of a good time, more likely; you know . . . just wires to put me off ... not that I mind ... quite natural."

Mr. Buffum dried up under Eliza's un-

responsive stare. She shook her head.
"Not Miss Lucia!" And repeated with a stern laugh, "Not Miss Lucia!" adding under her breath, "if I know a wart from a winkle, as you might say."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I'm inclined to agree with you," said Mr. Buffum, and wandered out of the kitchen, feeling both relieved and ashamed of himself.

He disliked ringing a person up, considerably more even than being rung up, especially on some subject other than the very simplest business. But he gave the trunk call at once, and waited a nerve-wracking ten minutes for the call to be put through. At last it came, and, thank goodness, the line was clear.

"That you, dear? Uncle speaking."

"You lamb to ring me up!"

"Are you quite well?"

"Yes, rather. That's to say—oh yes!" There was hesitation; then, too sudden brightness to be convincing. There was a moment's pause, during which he waited for Niece, who was always so direct, to make the running.

"Then why . . . I mean . . . as long as you're all right . . ." It was too difficult not to appear inquisitive. He stopped, then after a painful little silence the too bright voice came:

"The fact is, the car's not running; and I am a little under the weather, and . . ."

"Haven't you got some jolly plan on?"

he was emboldened to ask.

"Oh dear no! I mean . . ." (There was a laugh Mr. Buffum did not like.)
"Not particularly good company, that's really about all."

Mr. Buffum, at that, lost all diffidence,

became quite all assurance.

"Good enough for me," he asserted.

"On the contrary, I shouldn't dream of shaking meself over you like a wet dog."

"It's a quarter past ten now. I shall be with you at 12.30. I should be glad if you would lunch with me and be driven down here." A pause. "Did you hear me, Lucia?"

"Oh yes, I heard! Thank you."

Deuce take it! She was crying. He hung up the receiver, perturbed.

A drive to London was always a solemn affair with Monnie, with the prospect of eating his dinner in a real London garage, where he could talk with drivers and mechanics. This drive was more solemn than usual, for he sensed Mr. Buffum's anxiety and was afraid something must be very wrong indeed with Miss Lucia's car. It seemed incredible to his young mind that Mr. Buffum should have elicited no exact details of any kind. He feared the Governor

never would learn the importance of these

matters, and was shocked at his indifference.

Monnie was quite right. Mr. Buffum hardly gave the car a thought, except as a sign of Niece Lucia's state of mind. And his anxious thought took quickly on from Niece Lucia to the manifold dangers for any girl, however confident and self-supporting and free-minded and modern, in a world of unscrupulous men. The ancient dangers. It was all very well to say a girl could look after herself. Could she? The balance was not fairly held. The woman always suffered.

Well, things were as they were. For better or for worse. You couldn't put the clock back. He wasn't her father or mother; he was spared the job of approving or disapproving. He could, perhaps, help.

Must parents approve or disapprove? He supposed they must, and was thankful that he was not a parent . . . approving—disapproving—ghastly inhuman business. Yet didn't parental authority build the very fabric of society? A hand touched his arm: "Steady, Guv'nor: it's a fairish sharp bend."

He slowed down and, no longer allowing his attention to wander from the road,

reached the Westminster garage without

mishap.

For all his extreme diffidence, Mr. Buffum, curiously enough, felt no awkwardness in approaching Niece Lucia, though he had never before thus taken the bull by the horns. He did not expect her for a moment to show obvious signs of grief or to confide in him; so he was not embarrassed or put out by her cheeriness during lunch.

He liked this chance of action on his own initiative: it seemed to clear his mind, so that he was able to state quite firmly at the end of lunch, and, as he hoped, quite

clearly:

"I may disapprove of all modern ways of going on: I do. But you live in the world as it is, and I should like you to understand that if I can be of assistance in any difficulty or trouble, or . . . or scrape, it . . . it . . ." He became a little confused and finished tamely, looking round for the waiter: "That's what I'm there for. Yes. Bill, please!"

Monnie had no diffidence about probing; he rushed straight at it with a happy beam as they drove from the garage to the flat: "Had to fetch you, then, Miss Lucia, this time. What's the matter with yours? These sporty little buses are easy put out of order; need neat handling."

His ribald spirits were quenched by her

answer

"I had a good offer and I've sold her. Tired of her, as a matter of fact."

"Go on!" he gaped. "You never . . .

I say, Guv'nor, did you hear . . ."

She interrupted him; leaning across, she put a hand on Mr. Buffum's shoulder, to say in his ear: "I won't be five minutes packing, dear. Perhaps Monnie could come up and carry my suit-case down?"

URING the drive Mr. Buffum had his worst fears confirmed by Niece's silence and unresponsiveness to Monnie, who was anxious that the improvements in the Governor's driving should be appreciated, as a good master is anxious that a favourite pupil under inspection should appear at his best, and that that best should be noticed. Mr. Buffum's thought persisted that it was always the woman who suffered. It was never easy to be a woman; but surely at no time in the history of the world was it quite so difficult to be a woman as it was to-day. All this surface freedom: vet always it was the woman who ran the greatest risk, the woman who suffered. And they were so confoundedly unkind to each other . . .

Thank goodness, he'd come and fetched her down. Supposing he had remained sulky and hurt.

They arrived in time for a late tea, after which Mr. Buffum put on the gramophone

She marvelled at his total lack of fussy curiosity, and revelled in his kindness; as though she needed, as we all do at times, her faith in human beings to be restored and he were restoring it. Her courage, too. The peacefulness of it!

"Do you read a lot?" she suddenly



"She was crying. He hung up the receiver, perturbed."

a magnificent record—his latest acquisition—of a Brahms Symphony played by the Philadelphia orchestra.

This quiet Niece, this sad and solemn girl, was new to him. He liked the mood immensely. He felt in touch with something very deep and very human: and stepped softly, as it were, not to disturb it. So nice of her to feel she need make no pretence.

asked, wondering where he got his queer understanding from.

And in that quiet mood he confessed that he was able to approach certain dead writers in their work far more closely than he could any living man in his flesh. "Not right, perhaps," he added, "but circumstance can be so prickly, you know, to a shy man: and in books we have them, at their best moments, all to ourselves—to soak in—without disturbance." He spoke with extreme shyness, as though it were rather a liberty that he should be attached in this way to men with great names, household words.

He burbled on to the effect that there was something so unhurried and wholehearted about them: a writer nowadays must be three parts showman. She mustn't be angry with him for having no wish to be up to date. Niece listened, astonished, as she was gently admitted into the good world uncle inhabited; where Cowper was more alive than Coppard, and Landor than Lawrence. She listened in vain for any word of literary jargon: she heard only the voice of simple affection, as of a man speaking of friends who quickened his power of appreciating the simple things of life, who helped him to understand. . . . Uncle was an old marvel. She was obliged to start teasing him.

"You are an ancient fraud," she said.
"What about motoring and dancing and (she waved her hand) all the rest of it? As though you didn't enjoy things more than any boy—simply lap it up. Just good times, fun, you revel in them! You darling old humbug."

He was too pleased to notice the return of her spirits to mind the injustice of her charge.

"Gaiety without affection . . ." he began, smiling. "Almost anything without affection . . ." he ruminated, and stopped, grown feeble at the thought of what he would have missed if he had not had the gumption to fetch her down.

There ensued a long serious talk which was not interrupted by dinner, or rather an earnest soliloquy by Niece on her idea of what a woman's life might be, what indeed she was anxious to try and make of her life. Independence—above all, not to become ever just the appendage of some man. Have her own pursuits. See? Her own life. She'd love to marry. But not as a career. Did he understand?

Mr. Buffum tried to. He listened without raising any objection, or ever retaliating on her tease of himself by pointing out, as he so easily might, that she was a worse young fraud, and that underneath her flippancy and bravado she was far more deadly in earnest than he was himself. He was content to listen, too pleased to be thus admitted into her confidence to criticise its content. Her talk was intensely interesting to him, though there was nothing particularly original in what she said. She voiced the sentiments of most nice girls, nowadays. "Good gracious!" Mr. Buffum thought, "I may be listening to a future M.P." And he drew himself up at the thought with becoming respect.

Eventually, towards the end of the evening, came the disclosure, as Mr. Buffum

hoped, of her present difficulty.

Many things, it appeared, had come together to upset the conduct of her life. Parents were displeased that she had turned down an offer of marriage from a man whom they considered most eligible. "Eligible "exactly described him. "Lovable" did not; nor any epithet with colour in it. Parents were on hind legs: high time she gave up mad idea of making own life, living in London, learning bad ways. the office, too, beastly back-chat and bother, which had ended in another girl ousting her from main job. She'd sold her car, so had time to look round. Hold on for six weeks. Seventy-five pounds a year with allowance and own little nest-egg. Casual writings, an uncertain amount. Parents would not advance one single penny

Mr. Buffum was so relieved that her trouble was not connected with the ancient woe of woman, that his mind laughed at her difficulty and he said, beaming:

"Oh, my dear child, don't you worry.

I'll see you through."

No one likes to have her troubles poohpoohed. Niece was furious.

"Don't talk rot like that. Awfully nice of you and so on. Thanks very much all the same."

"But surely . . ."

"Wipe it out, Uncle. Wipe it clean out. Sponging on you isn't my idea of a part. See?"

"Put like that . . ." Mr. Buffum stammered. "I'm afraid I've been clumsy."

"That's why I wired I wasn't coming. I knew I should pour out my woes, and was afraid you'd . . ."

"We'll say no more about it," he hurried to interpose, and noticing that Niece was clad in a blue frock, he had the inspiration to beg her to listen to a new record he had lately bought, in which Mr. John Gosse and his gallant company sing rollicking Johnnie comes down to Hilo. The chorus with its

"OOOH! Wake her, Oh shake her,

OOOOH, wake the girl with the blue dress on,"

seemed, somehow, to be pleasantly appropriate, and he watched her slyly over his glasses during the progress of the ditty, which, whatever its effect upon Niece Lucia, created at any rate a diversion. The rollick of the song got into Mr. Buffum's blood and emboldened him to say:

"You were a donkey to sell your car; a quite small and furry but absolute donkey. Without consulting me."

"The bus is gone. We won't discuss it,

please," said a peremptory niece.

"I was not opening a discussion: I was making a pronouncement," Uncle, unabashed, responded. "Uttering a deep conviction which remains unshaken, cause . . ." A firm soft hand was pressed against his lips, preventing speech. was told to be serious. Something he could do. It was explained that parents were coming to town, he could talk to sister. That might help. He might possibly convince her that daughter was not tripping too fast along the primrose path to the bonfire.

Mr. Buffum tried to back out of it. He was bad at interviews. Could not imagine sister being influenced an eyelid's quiver by anything he might say. Lucia was a monstrous girl, forbidding what he would love to do, urging him to what he would hate to do. She belonged to a perverse and self-willed generation. Egged him on to selfish extravagance; refused to allow him to be a nice ordinary useful uncle.

"What could be more useful than to persuade mother I'm a nice respectable

girl?" she assured him.

"But I don't think you are. You are a reprobate," he vainly though truthfully objected.

It was all to no purpose; he found himself booked to lunch with sister on Thursday, and was informed that he was a most unbrotherly sort of person to be so reluctant to see the only living member of his family.

The interview, when at length the dreaded moment came, did not appear to be a pronounced success. Sister was a stout woman of energy and determination, who considered that Younger Brother wasted his life in dawdling and dreaming. could not take an intelligent interest in a political party, and stand for Parliament, he might at least run the Boy Scouts in his village, or do something useful. Her own life was earnest and strenuous: she sat on at least four committees a week (in both senses of the word), sometimes more: never less. The first stages of the inter-

view were occupied in blowing away Mr. Buffum's shadowy effort at existence so thoroughly that he had almost to pinch himself to make sure that any of him was there. He smiled wanly to suppose this flattened, dwindled creature could take up cudgels for anybody: the thought of lifting a cudgel was amusing: let alone wielding it against such an opponent in such a cause.

"I hear you've taken up motoring."

"Yes, dear."

"You see a lot of Lucia?"

"Yes, dear; not so much as . . ."
"And have learned to dance?"

"Yes, dear."

"Do you think this affectation of youthfulness is becoming at your age?"

"No, dear."

"Are you aware Lucia has refused John Evershed?"

"Yes, dear. I mean . . . well—somebody."

"Do you intend to do anything by her later on?"

"Yes, dear."

"Some sense, at any rate, the girl's got. I told her to look you up."

Much became clear to Mr. Buffum.

Sister never believed in innuendo.

"I must be frank with you, then, if you intend remembering her in your will. Did you know she spent two nights in George Upland's rooms? Supposed to be nursing him."

" No, dear; but . . ."

"Most foolish conduct: take a lot of explaining! That girl Marion's brother."

There was an awkward silence.

"May I ask if you approve of the way she is living?"

"No, dear. That's to say . . ."

"High time she returned home. At home she would not have an idle hour. This work of her own. This journalism . . . the frailest excuse for gadding about . . ."

Mr. Buffum made a supreme effort.

"I don't approve of her way of living, but I think she is . . . I think she herself is . . . "

"What do you think she is?"

He dwindled and collapsed and trailed off into a weak: "I like her."

Sister eyed him with pained astonishment (not for the first time) that a brother of hers could be so imbecile. She sighed.

"Settle the bill, Augustus, please," she "I have to be in Farsaid forgivingly. ringdon Street at 3.15."

So ended the interview. Not a pronounced success, Mr. Buffum knew.

A mouse might as well set out hopefully to divert a steam-roller from its course. It was out of the question that Niece should dream of trying to live in the same house diverting the steam-roller had not been attained.

Heaven! How curiously human beings felt constrained to behave with each other!



with her. It couldn't be done. That was the sad conviction that filled his mind and heart to the exclusion of everything else. So, perhaps, the interview was not such a complete failure as it would appear to the flattened mouse, though its direct end of

What odd forms mother love could take! A mere business interview with his banker, which under ordinary circumstances would have been rather alarming, now proved child's-play. In five minutes he gave instructions to have sold the Deferred

shares with which he had been presented on the formation of the great Chemical Combine. Then called for Niece, whom

Niece, as might be expected after two days with Mother in the offing.
"No good, I suppose?" she queried.



"This quiet Niece, this sad and solemn girl, was new to him. He liked the mood immensely."

he was to drive down with him, as some compensation for the painful ordeal to which she had subjected him.

He met a very firm-lipped and obdurate

"None. None at all," he hastily admitted. "Less even than I had hoped." They drove back in silence.

At tea there was awkwardness in the

air, of which both were conscious. Lucia noticed Uncle's uneasiness and quailed to think what ghastly indiscretion Mother might not have been seduced by her bright candour into committing. Mr. Buffum was aware of the distrust in Lucia's mind and wondered how best he could touch and remove it without hurt.

After tea he tackled the difficulty at She suggested hearing some records, but he said no; he wanted her in the study

to talk things quietly over.

His beginning was not auspicious.

"In some ways you are very like your dear mother."

"Thank you!"

"Yes; you have your directness straight from her."

"Oh, don't! That awful candour! Blurting out unpleasantness! What has she been saying now?"

Mr. Buffum smiled. "A very good thing for me you obeyed her in one respect."

"What do you Niece looked startled. mean?"

"Looking me up."

"Oh, it is too bad. And why she wanted me to look you up. That was well rubbed in, I gather?"

"Yes; she was quite lucid about that." Niece was furiously blushing. Uncle went on, smiling: "Looking me up was, I believe, the only action in either of our lives (and we underwent the most terrible scrutiny, I assure you) of which she seemed wholly to approve. And I...er...I... on that

point alone . . . was inclined to agree with her." "Well, it's cleared the air at any rate," Niece Lucia laughed out rather harshly. "And now you see why I could never touch a penny of yours. I came to cadge. Suck up. You know. Beastly."

"Yes; I've noticed the barefaced way you've played up to Uncle for what you could get."

"Not so! I got fond of you and never did." "So like her dear mother," Mr. Buffum murmured to the ceiling, "in awful candour!"

Niece was glowering, not in the mood to respond to teasing. "Other people," she said bitterly, "muck things up."

Mr. Buffum, unable to catch on to her meaning, continued quietly: "I have made

arrangements . . ."

She interrupted him, almost fiercely: "Look here! You're a perfect old lamb to want to help me. But there—is nothing-doing." She separated each word for emphasis. "Mother's beastly suggestion which I took in first looking you up is one

But there's another. Quite as reason. strong. Apart from the fact that money always messes up a relationship. If I took money from you I should feel a pig if I did anything you didn't approve of. Have to account for my actions. there are heaps of things I should do without a qualm that would shock you pink."

"Oh, I know, dear. Nearly all you do. Like stopping with George two nights to

nurse him."

"So she told you that, did she? Well...?" Her head was back; she was surprised in her mood of challenging grandeur to hear:

"I could almost rub the small, furry donkey's soft nose. How many times must I explain to you that if you ask me do I approve? I must answer No. But is your modern brightness incapable of understanding that there is an attitude other than that of approval or disapproval?"

Diffident Uncle began to tower: brazen Niece felt awed to tears. This would never The tables must be turned, somehow. And quickly. Meanwhile, Mr. Buffum held "I don't know enough to judge the floor. what is right for others. Each of us knows that, inside, for himself. You do. I believe in you, because I'm rather fond of you."

A minute Niece, awed, tried to gain some foothold by venturing in a small voice: "The old prophet. Listen to him. You

look just like Abinadab."

Uncle, unused to the prophetic rôle, was easily tripped up. He blinked and smiled and inquired: "And who is he?"

"Ezekiel's father, of course. Or should

But it was a little too much for Niece; she gave way to absurd uncontrolled laughter and tears, through which words faltered: "You're—quite—too dear—"

"That's as it may be," said Mr. Buffum. "But we'll have no more nonsense about sponging and such ridiculous rubbish. As though I could possibly drive about in a Planet and you without a car. The idea is ludicrous. Absurd. Preposterous."

And he went on murmuring *Unthinkable* —Absurd—Preposterous—to hide the delicious uneasiness which human beings are apt to feel when they have grown a little fonder of each other, and taken a little step towards a closer mutual understanding.

R. BUFFUM'S practical arrangements worked ments worked out at a car, and £25 a quarter till further notice, which was very nice for Niece.

THE LADY OF LONESOME

LEONARD SELDEN

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

0

WN up, Hawkins! You're lost, aren't you? You haven't the foggiest idea where we are!"

Shifting uneasily his grip on the notched steering-wheel, the stolid, middle-aged chauffeur peered yet more intently out into the mirk and replied:

"Yes, sir; no, sir."

"Two-bags-full, in fact," commented Rupert Castlereagh, with a grimace of blended amusement and irritation.

Prefaced by an expensive, musty breakfast at a bad, frowsy hotel, the exasperating day's journey had included three punctures in rapid succession and was now petering out in strange, unfriendly country lashed by torrents of hail. The time was five minutes short of midnight.

"Shall I go on, sir?" asked Hawkins,

turning his head slightly.

"Oh yes; we must get somewheresometime."

Rupert lighted a cigarette. Listening to the hail drumming on the roof of the saloon, to the hum of the engine, and to the swish of the fat balloon tyres on the saturated road, he idly watched the pellets of ice as they clattered on the wind-screen and bounced from it. Heaving ever and again a gentle sigh of resignation, Hawkins stared at the strip of glistening track which shone like gold in the fan of light from the lamps. After a few minutes had passed he said:

"Houses, I think, sir."

Rupert roused himself from the nodding doze into which he had fallen and also stared ahead. Yes; at the foot of the hill a cluster of roofs were revealed as the moon suddenly peeped coyly through a rift in the heavy counterpane of clouds.

"Not a light anywhere," murmured

Hawkins gloomily.

"I don't wonder—at this time of night," replied Rupert. "All the same, we'll rouse somebody, get our bearings, and either

push on or stop here."

The last two words were prophetic; after entering a road having largish houses on each side, there came a pop and a gasp from the engine and the car slowed down to a standstill. Hastily descending, Hawkins lifted the long bonnet and with the aid of a flash-lamp examined the sleeping machinery. After fiddling with various gadgets, he straightened himself and sighed

"No go?" asked Rupert.

"Not till I can get at it in daylight, sir."

"Right. Then let's explore."

Taking the lamp, Rupert, closely followed by Hawkins, walked to the nearest house. They mounted a short flight of steps and Rupert briskly plied the knocker. No answer. Then he grasped a knob and set clanging a loud-tongued bell whose peals resounded throughout the building. No answer.

"I wouldn't trouble any more with this house, sir," advised Hawkins.

"Why not?"

"Because there's no glass in the windows,

sir. I believe the place is empty."

A flash with the lamp proved the truth of this conjecture. With a grunt of displeasure, Rupert led the way next door. He was about to ascend the steps when Hawkins's hand was laid on his arm.

"What is it, man?"

"Begging your pardon, sir; but this house hasn't any windows either. It's hardly likely, is it, sir, that anyone lives

"Before we try again, Hawkins," said Rupert, "point out quickly any flaws that you may detect, will you? Don't spare my feelings; be brave; speak out like a man."

Hawkins smiled bleakly and allowed his eyes to roam dispassionately over the next gloomy frontage.

"Well, sir ..."

" Well ? "

"The windows of this house, sir, is all boarded up. It's hardly likely, is it, sir—"

They did. After knocking and ringing at what seemed countless doors, they returned to the car. The whole town or village was apparently uninhabited.

"Well, Hawkins, is one of us having a nightmare? If it's you, kindly wake

up!'

"The place looks haunted, sir," said Hawkins fearfully.

"Haunted? Very well, I'll scare the



"Your judgment is sound but uncomforting," said Rupert, as he hustled Hawkins away. "Let's try another road."

spooks!" So saying, Rupert pressed his finger on the button of the electric horn, which hiccoughed and yammered for fully a minute. As the echoes of the uproar died away a light winked in the one house—just opposite—that they had not tried, a

ful way) had come, Rupert and Hawkins looked at each other and laughed. Then Rupert ran to the window where he judged



window was heard to open, and a girl's voice called:

"You are making a dreadful noise!"
After staring in the direction from which
these words (uttered in a calmly reproach-

the speaker to be standing, and said: "Awfully sorry, but we are stranded. Car gone phut."

"Hard luck. But that's no reason why you should make such a din, is it?"

"Nevertheless, the din seems to have accomplished its purpose," said Rupert. "Where can we get help?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Isn't there a hotel where we can put up for the night, or what's left of it?"

"There's an inn," came the voice; "but

it's empty."

"Post office? Railway station? Police

station, then?" pleaded Rupert.

"The post office is empty too; we've no police station; we have a railway station

" Ah!"

"Wait. The railway station is shut and there are never any trains. The rails were taken away during the War."

"This place seems—by the way, what is

this place?"

" Lonesome!"

Out of the darkness there came a snort

"What was that?" asked the voice,

startled.

"That was Hawkins, my chauffeur," replied Rupert. "Hawkins was approving your label for your home town. Yes, he was endorsing it ardently."

"But this place is Lonesome."
"Truly apt," agreed Rupert. "I'd be glad to congratulate you at further length if we could discuss the matter in comfort. As it is, however, I suppose we must shelter in the car. Good-bye."

Turning on his heel rather indignantly, he was about to leave the garden when there came the scrape of bolts. The door swung back and Rupert saw two women standing in the hall. One, possibly a housekeeper, who held a hurricane lamp, was old; the other much younger.

"Let's have a closer look at you," said

"I am Sir Rupert Castlereagh; that is Hawkins; and that is my car. Can't you take us in? We are wet and cold, but quite respectable."

"Can we, Nanny?" The girl, who was queerly dressed in an old trench coat thrown on over pyjamas and gum boots, turned to her companion. There was a short, whis-

pered conversation.

"Nanny says that we shall be murdered in our beds. That sounds gruesome, but I'm going to let you in. We can look after ourselves. See!" And she displayed a small, gleaming revolver.

"Very impressive," said Rupert. "Haw-

kins!"

" Sir ? "

"Put your hands up and come quietly. We're under arrest."

Hawkins's expressive snort was heard again, followed by Hawkins himself, looking rather ridiculous as he appeared from the darkness with his arms in the traditional posture of surrender.

The girl laughed. "What about your car?" she asked.

"Well, what about it?" said Rupert.

"Is it confiscated?"

"Yes, for the night," said she, laughing again. "You'll find carriage gates and a coach-house at the side there. If all that magnificence doesn't feel affronted, it has my permission to lodge with our old rattle-

"I'll check any unseemly exhibition of pride," Rupert assured her. "Come on.

Hawkins. Let's push in the bus."

The housekeeper met them as they reentered the hall. She was alone.

"Got over your fears?" asked Rupert

chaffingly.

"Pretty well, sir," she replied. "I know a gentleman when I see one. Besides—"

"Yes?"

"I've the kitchen poker with me." So saying, she waggled a formidable lump of iron which was tightly clenched in her disengaged hand.

Checking a desire to laugh, Rupert asked:

"And the young lady . . . ?"

"She's gone to see whether you woke her

uncle. This way, please."

"Are we likely to have disturbed anyone else?" inquired Rupert as he and Hawkins followed her.

"No, sir. There are no other mortal

souls in all Lonesome."

So saying, she led the way up a flight of thickly carpeted stairs, her lamp making grotesque shadows as she walked. Finally she paused before a door.

"There you are, sir. You can put a match to the fire; you'll find it all ready laid. I've set out some bread and cheese and beer-it's little more than that we can

afford nowadays."

"Many, many thanks," said Rupert. "But tell me: is the whole place really I don't understand." deserted?

"Miss Celys will explain all about it in the morning. Good night, sir." She turned away and, sighing deeply, vanished down a corridor.

Wondering mightily, Rupert and Hawkins entered their room.

II.

" $H^{ ext{AWKINS?"}}$

"We were a pair of mugs last night."
"Yes, sir!" agreed Hawkins briskly.

"Why didn't we bring in the small

trunk?"

"Too much of a hurry to get into the warm and dry, sir," confessed Hawkins.
"The ladies might have changed their minds

if we'd kept them waiting."

"Quite true; and this is better than the car."

The room was pleasant and sunny and its windows gave on to a scene that was pale blue and gold as to the sky, russet and emerald as to the flat vista of countryside, margined by the dull sapphire of the sea. On the left lay Lonesome's houses, from whose chimneys no smoke curled. On the right, nearer the sea, was the square tower of a grey old church.

As nothing stirred in their lodging, Hawkins, after a rapid, surreptitious trip to the coach-house, presently returned with a suit-case. They made a hasty toilet and

went downstairs together.

From a room off the rather dingy hall they were suddenly hailed.

"Is that you, Sir Rupert?"

"Good morning," said Rupert, entering.
"Is the revolver loaded?—cocked?—ready for instant use?"

"Don't be unkind," she answered, laughing. "You must admit that your visit

was a trifle unexpected."

"I suppose it was. But surely you and the lady of the poker," he paused, as the old woman herself appeared and beckened to Hawkins, "surely the pair of you armed to the teeth—not to mention your uncle, within earshot I suppose—might have coped with us."

"Let me cope a little more conventionally. I know your name. Mine is Celys Wood-

thorpe."

"Of Lonesome, I understand," put in

Rupert, bowing.

"Sir Rupert," she said seriously, "forget that name—at any rate when you meet my uncle. His name is Woodthorpe too; my father was his brother. My uncle named this unhappy town after himself. Forget 'Lonesome': remember 'Woodthorpe.'"

"I will. I'm not likely to forget it," said Rupert, thinking that no man could forget anything that shared the name of

so entrancing a damsel.

She was slightly above middle height and had a slim, boyish figure. Her complexion was of that creamy, olive pallor which bespeaks perfect health: her cheeks seemed stained with the delicate tincture of the wild rose. From beneath dark brows that matched her chestnut hair two large solemn eyes of deepest blue looked frankly out over an impudent little tip-tilted nose whose bridge was lightly powdered with freckles. Her mouth was perfect. Not too small, its exquisitely chiselled curves gave her, when she was pensive, a gravity almost pathetic; yet happiness woke with her smile.

She did not smile as she continued:

"Woodthorpe, or Lonesome, as the villagers in these parts call it, is a folly of my uncle. A good many years ago he caught the building fever. He went on putting up houses here, never realising that people might find the place too much off the map. That was before the days of popular motoring. There was a branch railway line, but for reasons best known to themselves the railway company reduced the service till it became absurdly restricted. When the War came they stopped the service altogether and finally took away the rails. That was a knock-down blow. Last autumn we had a landslip which destroyed a whole row of the cottages forming the original village. The few remaining villagers decamped in fright. No one will ever live here now."

"Your uncle . . .?"

"My uncle still believes in the place. He hopes people will come here. Poor uncle! Poor old Lonesome! Look," she continued, pointing to a gaping crack which stretched from the ceiling to the floor; "I well recollect the night that happened. There was a noise like a gunshot and we couldn't think what was the matter till we made an examination the next morning. The whole of the back part of the house had dropped nearly three inches."

"But surely anyone can see it's unsafe to live here," exclaimed Rupert. "If Lonesome had any hope of a future people would pay something, anyhow, to get a

roof over their heads."

"That may be true," remarked Celys.
"The villagers, for instance, might have been glad to return—on reasonable terms; but my uncle's ideas on rent are impossible: he asks prohibitive figures."

"What about your own safety?"

"As for that," she replied, "I hope I shall

be safe enough here for a little while. I must risk it, at all events, for I've nowhere else to go. I'm very fond of my uncle, too; he must be looked after, and—well, there the matter rests."

"Where is your uncle?" asked Rupert.

"Oh, he's a very early bird. I dare say
we shall meet him by the sea; that is, if
you'd care to inspect Lonesome by daylight."

III.

I N the sunshine the deserted town looked more not look feet more, not less, forlorn. Grass grew between the cracks in the wide pavements and the gardens of the big, gaunt houses were wildernesses. Everywhere blistered, flaking paint and crumbling brick and stone told their melancholy story of ruin and decay. The station—a weird sight—reminded Rupert of his war experiences near Arras and Armentières. Where once the rails had run was a broad, grassy ribbon of turf overgrown in places with tall weeds. Here and there a sapling sprouted from the middle of the track: grass poked its spears between the platform's planks. By some freak of a long-departed signalman the arms of the signals had been placed at safety and conveyed the impression that a phantom, ancient train might come puffing under the dilapidated little wooden foot-bridge.

Disaster was still more plainly heralded by the appearance of the main street. Its flagstones tilted all ways. Gaping chasms crossed the road which ran straight as an arrow into the very waves lapping the tumbled, seaweed-covered masses of brickwork that were once a row of cottages.

Rupert looked about him and gasped.

"My dear Miss Woodthorpe, to stay here is madness—it's suicidal. Look at the lie of the land. This street might be the bed of a canal expressly designed to drown you. An extra high tide with an inshore wind behind it would raise a torrent sufficient to flood this place in ten minutes. Nothing could stop it: you've no sea-wall. Your uncle must be demented!"

"I've told you I have nowhere else to go, Sir Rupert," answered Celys coldly. "I love my uncle. I can't desert him. I must stop here."

"Good girl," came a voice from behind

them.

Treading quietly, the speaker had approached them unheard. He was a man of perhaps sixty, slim and bony, and had a pair of eyes of faded blue which held some-

thing of the same mournful expression that slumbered in the eyes of his niece. His face was haggard and worn, tanned and weatherbeaten. His hooked nose and his strong chin, on which grew a thin beard, gave him the likeness of Don Quixote. He wore no hat on his thick grey hair and his dress was a shapeless suit of threadbare Harris tweed. He never looked at Rupert or Celys as he spoke; but stood gazing out to sea, motionless save that his hands restlessly clasped and unclasped before him.

"Celys," he said harshly, "who is this?"
"Let me thank you for your hospitality last night, Mr. Woodthorpe," said Rupert,

stepping forward. "I---"

Woodthorpe waved his hand impatiently. "For such poor cheer as we were able to offer I ask no thanks," he said. "But you don't believe in my town. You think me demented, eh? Yet you cannot deny that this spot is perfect, its aspect perfect, its air wonderful."

"With all of that I heartily agree,"

answered Rupert.

Woodthorpe's face lost a trifle of its grimness.

"You think the sea is too near, though, don't you?"

"Perhaps I do."

"Then look at that church. For six centuries it has stood there, and there it will stand when you and I and Celys are dust."

"Where is its congregation, Mr. Wood-

thorpe?" asked Rupert.

"We are its congregation, Sir Rupert," said Celys quickly. "Every Sunday, service is held in it by a clergyman who visits us. My uncle rings the bell."

"And soon, soon, I tell you," said Woodthorpe, "I shall ring that bell every day, and every Sunday the priest will preach to

crowded aisles."

"What about these?" asked Rupert,

pointing to the ruins in the sea.

"Young man," answered Woodthorpe, "those houses, properly protected, might be standing to-day. What town is there on the seashore but needs a wall of some kind? Hastings, Cromer, Penzance—is the sea less furious there when it is roused? Those towns flourish as this will flourish. Look at that sea which has smiled and sparkled there for ages. It can be tamed and held in check elsewhere, why not here?"

"But-" began Rupert.

"All that my town needs is a sea-wall—and a proper train service."

At this moment Hawkins appeared.

"Car's all ready, sir."

"Good-bye, good-bye," cried Woodthorpe. "Think over what I've said. Good-bye, good-bye"; and, talking to himself, he left them.

As the car sped away Rupert heard the chiming of the old church bell. In the church Celys watched her uncle as, with head held proudly erect, he sounded his message of farewell, challenge, and hope.

IV.

GOOD heavens! Isn't the money mine? Can't I do what I like with it ?—chuck it into the sea if I want to?" "You can certainly, if you want to," replied the lawyer, smiling rather uneasily. "Nevertheless, answer me one thing, Sir Rupert. Is it your heart or your head which dictates this-" he was about to say "wild-cat scheme" but substituted "highly speculative venture" instead.
Rupert flushed. "About saving Lone-

some, Mr. Tillotson," he said, "I freely admit that there is something of the forlorn hope. I don't admit that the project is impossible. So much for my head. to-my heart, I-well, I will be frank. I love Miss Woodthorpe. I want her to

marry me."

"Have you asked her yet?"

" No."

The lawyer sighed and gazed for a moment out of his office window at the quiet, oldfashioned square which is famous all over England for its legal associations.

"I, too, will be frank, Sir Rupert," he began. "Since you told me of this affair I have made it my business to visit Lone-

some."

"Did you see Miss Woodthorpe?" asked

Rupert quickly.

"I did. I thought her a charming young lady, likely to be all you think her.

And her uncle?"

"I saw him too," replied Tillotson, with a shrug of the shoulders which caused Rupert to bite his lip.

"I inspected the neighbouring coast," continued the lawyer rather hurriedly. "About a quarter of a mile along it eastwards from Lonesome I noted a line of black rocks-at least," he paused and corrected himself, "I took them for rocks at first until I discovered what they really are."

"And what are they?"

"They are the remains of a sea-wall, Sir Rupert; a sea-wall built thirty or forty vears ago. The builders, like you, hoped to stem the inroads of the sea, but the builders failed. That black line is hundreds of yards away from the dry land now. How much do you think the attempt cost? -all building was far cheaper then, as you will know."

"How much?"

"Over fifteen thousand pounds. been told that a similar attempt could not be made to-day for less than three times that amount."

Rupert was silent. The lawyer watched him carefully, then added: "You will say that your estate could at a pinch meet such a terrible charge, but you will forgive me for reminding you that it is substantially mortgaged. What of that pension list your father bequeathed to you with his money? Old servants too, old relatives; recollect that you run the risk of making them paupers."

Rupert turned pale. He knew how true this was. Also, to his father's pensioners he himself had added not a few. An old school-friend or so, a housemaster who had met with financial disaster, his army batman, the education of his penniless and widowed sister-in-law's children, all these were calls, half-yearly, on his bounty.

Everywhere he had encountered opposition, similar to that of the lawyer. Bankers, stockbrokers, even a firm of marine engineers who, one might have thought, would have welcomed work in sheer self-interest—all were discouraging. Of his friends, some dissuaded with kindness and manifest disinterestedness; those less intimate thought him mad.

HY do you come here?" cried Woodthorpe. "To scoff, or to help me?"

He, Rupert, and Celys looked at each other across the table in the room in which had occurred that first meeting a couple of months ago.

"Not to scoff, I can assure you, Mr. Woodthorpe," said Rupert. "I come to ask for your niece."

Woodthorpe started. "So," he said

slowly. "So that's it."

"Yes, I love your niece, Mr. Woodthorpe. I ask your permission to marry her."

Woodthorpe smiled grimly. "There's

but one thing stops me from bidding you take yourself off—out of this house and away from my estate. Do you know why I say that?"

"Uncle!" cried Celys.

"Why?" asked Rupert in amazement.
"Listen to me carefully, both of you," said .Woodthorpe. "Listen, Celys; and you, sir. Listen, too, and tell me whether or no your father's Christian name was Giles."

"It was."

Woodthorpe turned to Celys with an expression of savage triumph. "There he sits," he cried. "There he sits: the son of the man who made this place a ruin and turned Woodthorpe into Lonesome. Ah, young man, you may or may not know what your father did for me and mine. If you do not, let me tell you that he cut us off from civilisation, he crabbed the railway schemes. He, the purblind railway director!"

"Uncle," cried Celys again, "is this

true?"

"True, girl, of course it's true. Ask this young man how much he inherited in shares of the line that ought to be serving my town."

"Even if it be true," said Rupert quietly,

"am I to blame?"

"Before you answer that, Celys," put in Woodthorpe, "ask yourself another question: who is it that has loved and cared for you like a father—like a mother, even? Who has watched over you, hoped for you, prayed for you?"

"I know, I know, Uncle," said Celys

softly.

"Are you going to forsake me, then?"

"Mr. Woodthorpe," said Rupert earnestly, "I know what you feel towards your niece. You love her. But I love her too."

"Love?" said the old man more calmly.

"Love? True love stands many a test—
at least mine has. Mine has stood the tests
of disappointment, anxiety, loss. Let me
test your love. Prove it. First let me tell
you that by making me happy you make
her happy as well. Is that not so, Celys?"

She nodded her head.

"Then, sir," cried Woodthorpe, turning to Rupert, "help me to build this town up again. Back your love of Celys by your faith in me. Come in with me financially. Help me with capital. Not so very much is needed to turn the scale. Exert your influence with the railway authorities and the thing is done."

"Mr. Woodthorpe," said Rupert, "it's impossible. Cannot I make you understand that this enterprise of yours is hopeless? Sooner or later, perhaps very much sooner than we dream of, that hungry sea may swallow up this very house."

"Is that your last word?" asked Wood-

thorpe, with a face of stone.

"It is—it must be," said Rupert.

"Then get out of here," shouted Woodthorpe, leaping to his feet. "You are younger than I, Sir Rupert, but if you do not go you'll bitterly regret it."

Rupert ignored him and turned to Celys. He held out his arms but said nothing. A deep flush suffused those ivory cheeks. For an instant her eyes, meeting his, shone like stars. She made an irresolute step towards

him.

But at that moment, when youth's magic call to youth exerted its sweetest enchantment, there came that most awful of sounds, the dry, despairing sobs of an old, disappointed man. Woodthorpe had flung himself again into his chair and lay with his head buried in his arms that sprawled across the table.

Celys's eyes filled with tears. She moved rapidly to the grief-stricken man and gently touched his hair. Then she turned to Rupert.

"Sir Rupert," said she hoarsely, "please

go. I-I shall stick to the ship."

Rupert gazed mournfully at them for a space: then he turned and quietly walked from the room.

VI.

THE newsboys' shouts broke the tense silence that fell after Rupert, seated again in the lawyer's office, had said: "Mr. Tillotson, I'm going on with it."

The two gazed hard at each other—Rupert, with pale, determined face; Tillotson, with the corners of his mouth turned down, stroking his chin in aggrieved perplexity.

Then there became audible in the old, green-panelled room the cry of "Terrible floods in—"

Without a word, Rupert hastened into the street.

At the moment when Mr. Tillotson was reading the headline,

STRANGE TOWN IN DANGER.

the amazed Hawkins, Rupert beside him, was steering northwards.



"'Mr. Woodthorpe,' said Rupert loudly, 'in an hour the town will be deep under water.

The waves are battering the place to pieces. Come away."

VII.

OTHING in the wild drive was more grotesque than that which Rupert and Hawkins saw when the long snout of the car swung into the main street of Lonesome. Lonesome it was, indeed, no more. The road was crowded with all kinds of spectators pressing, pressing onwards to spots where they could safely watch the fury of the sea. 'To add to the clamour, some dislodgment of the masonry of the church tower had loosed the tongues of the bells, which swung and clashed in a mad clamour.

Nearer the sea the road was under water. which, instead of subsiding into pools, was furrowed with waves-big waves with curling crests and thunderous breakings. At regular intervals, and curling high over its smaller brothers, swept a billow of water that rolled along with appalling swiftness to dash itself at last against the walls of the houses standing at the bend in the road. Rupert was reminded of the bore on the Severn; but the spectacle was more awe-inspiring than that. Each successive billow was taller, its passage more swift, its impact more violent. Every now and then came a blast of wind that shrieked and howled over the roofs. At such times the air seemed full of sleet or rain, but as this blew into Rupert's face he tasted not fresh but salt water.

He caught occasional snatches of shouted conversation from the crowd.

"That was a big one—look at that wall . . . Hoy! There it goes"—and a rumbling crash followed the cry.

Leaning out of the car, Rupert grabbed the shoulder of a man who carried a cinematograph camera and tripod.

"How's the tide?"

"Turns in half an hour," shouted back the photographer.

"What—to ebb, to go out?"

"No, to come in. I've never seen such a tide—scarcely went back at all, even at its lowest." The man wrenched himself free and hurried away.

If the tide turned in half an hour the worst was yet to be. What would happen then? Rupert scrambled out of the car, shouted to Hawkins, "I'm going to look for the Woodthorpes," and pushed his way back along the road.

Arrived at the Woodthorpes' house, he leapt up the steps and hammered furiously on the door. The knocker came off in his hand. He was about to repeat his onslaught

with the broken piece of corroded brass when the door was suddenly opened. There stood Celys. At that moment Hawkins stopped the car in the road before them.

" Celys!"

"Rupert!—Sir Rupert!"

"Celys, this is madness. It's tragedy, or soon will be. The tide is coming in. Where's your uncle?"

She stared at him with an expression in which terror, admiration, and bewilderment fought for mastery; then she beckened to him to follow and led him to a room where Woodthorpe was sitting motionless with his hands dangling like things on wires before him. His eyes were fixed in their accustomed stony stare into nothingness; his cheeks were wet with tears.

"Mr. Woodthorpe," said Rupert loudly, "in an hour the town will be deep under water. The waves are battering the place

to pieces. Come away."

"I will not." There was no anger in the tone but only heartrending despair.

"But Celys-" began Rupert.

"If it pleases her to forsake him who has done everything for her, she can go."

"Sir," said Rupert angrily, "it is her very loyalty to you which is endangering her life."

Woodthorpe shrugged his shoulders and did not reply. Just then Celys, who had left them when Rupert entered, returned. "Hawkins is waiting in the housekeeper's room," she said with a brave attempt to speak steadily.

"And your housekeeper?" asked Rupert, struck by the thought that there was some-

one else to save.

"She cleared out yesterday," said Wood-thorpe, frowning.

"Sensible woman!" exclaimed Rupert.
"You think so, do you?" asked Wood-thorpe.

"Î do. indeed!"

Woodthorpe gave a sudden, short laugh; then, to Rupert's unspeakable relief, he rose and said: "I'm going."

" What!"

"Yes, I'm going. But not with you. In our car. I've no railway investments to enable me to keep two thousand pounds' worth of machinery; but I won't come with you. I've no wish to rub elbows with Giles Castlereagh's son."

Rupert compressed his lips but did not answer. Woodthorpe left the room. Presently they heard the slam of the coachhouse doors, the cranking up of an engine, and the crunch of tyres. Next came the hum and whirr of the big car's self-starter. Celys ran from the room and quickly returned in the old trench-coat she had worn when Rupert first met her. A little pull-on hat of leather covered her head.

From his seat in his own old car Wood-thorpe leant towards them, saying:

"I'm going to take a short cut along the

cliff, Celys."

She would have joined him on the driving seat, but he suddenly repulsed her and saying, "Celys, ah, Celys. Good-bye," let in his clutch without warning and moved swiftly away.

Celys stared at the vanishing tail-light; then with fear in her eyes turned to Rupert. He quickly lifted her into his car, which

started in pursuit.

After a couple of cautiously taken rightangled turns Woodthorpe put on speed; Hawkins did likewise, and as they all swayed round another corner Celys was flung against Rupert. He caught her in his arms, but, looking out of the window, she freed herself with a cry.

"Rupert! He's gone mad! The sea!

—the sea!"

Rupert wrenched down the glass partition and shouted to Hawkins, who, however, had seen the danger before them. From the dimness in front came a faint wail, followed by a crash from far beneath. On went the brakes under Hawkins's unfaltering touch.

After an appalling slither and skid the big car stopped with its front wheels not a yard from that steep death which lay beyond the broken edge of the road.

At that moment the wind stopped with uncanny suddenness; there was a blinding flash of lightning. They saw the cruel precipice and, beyond it, a maddened, boiling sea on which surged towards them a gigantic hummock of grey water.

"Uncle, uncle!" sobbed Celys, clasping

her hands over her eyes.

"Back!" roared Rupert.

Round came the steering-wheel, first right, then left—the car spun about and leaped away. Just in time! The tidal wave struck with a deafening crash, there was a rending and a cracking, and a huge fragment of the cliff sliced itself off and fell with a roar which drowned the clamour of the sea. Such was the grave of Woodthorpe, the man: the grave of Woodthorpe, the town, of Lonesome the foredoomed, was beneath the countless tons of water which swept over it.

"Uncle, uncle! What shall I do?"

cried Celys.

Rupert turned from the back window.

"Do, my darling? You're coming with me."

And, bending, he kissed her tear-salt cheek.

She murmured, "Am I?" but her lips sought his.

SHOULDST THOU FORSAKE ME.

THERE are things worse than Death,
O my Beloved—
Worse than Death it would be
Shouldst thou forsake me,
If thou of thine own will shouldst turn
And break me
With the sorrow that eats the heart—
The weight of tears unshed.
With the kind look withheld,
And the love-words unsaid.

Sometimes when I hear in the night
The dark seas pound the shore,
The backwash of the shingle
And the long waves roar,
I think I would exchange it
For my loveless bed
If the kind look was withheld
And the love-words unsaid.

TIM SILVER.

THAT SETTLES IT

By HYLTON CLEAVER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK WILES

ARRY CHITLOW buttoned up his jacket as a sign that all was over.

He said, rather ominously: "Very

He looked at his mother, whose great argument in times of stress was that those present should remember how upsets induced her headaches. Then he glared at his father, who could not button his coat on account of his protuberant midriff and the fact that he was an Archdeacon.

"That settles it," said Barry. "There is

no more to be said."

He closed the door behind him with the neat precision of one who is at his iciest when others are choleric. Mrs. Chitlow had a relapse in a chair, and the Archdeacon hurried to the window and dramatically looked out.

"Ah! He is getting out his bicycle!"

"His bicycle?" moaned Mrs. Chitlow. This was worse than his revolver.

"He is pumping up the tyres!"

You bet he was, and zealously. Barry detested bicycles, but his car was out of action; and in another minute he was leaning forward in a hunched style, pedalling down the drive with rare determination. He took the curve with both wheels on the thin edge of a ditch.

The Archdeacon said:

"He's gone. My son. He has defied me."

His fingers moved spasmodically, for he badly wanted to button up his coat as his son had done, and thus suggest finality. He strove with both hands till the veins stood out, but when only one inch short he had to give in, and he then looked in a fever at his wife. She did not speak, so the Archdeacon had to fall back on the timeworn tag:

"That settles it."

Only, of course, it didn't.

Barry drove that push-bike down a road greasy from rain; the mud rose in a curving spray from his back wheel and in stabbing spurts from his front. The imprint of his tyres unwound behind him at high speed. for he was eager to arrive before his present mood evaporated. He came to a hill-top. On his left a signboard spoke one instant and was gone the next. It shouted "DAN-GER!" but in vain. He knew about the hill, but what he didn't know was that the board for once was right. The peril that awaited him was something vastly more exciting than a hairpin bend. It was a girl, and she was just then starting up the hill on foot. She was one of those quite good girls who can't help looking naughty. Her lips were not content with being kissable; they seemed to want to kiss; and it must be extremely difficult to look like that and yet behave. Her name was Joyce: Joyce Hedley. Barry swooped down, his eyes wide with exhibaration in that mad descent, all ready for the hairpin bend, but this he never took. He looked up and his eyes met hers. Next instant he had skidded like a flashing arrow, heeled over at the kerb and met a lamp-post with his head. He hit the lamp-post with such puissance that his head seemed to stay embedded in it whilst his legs stood stiffly out behind. Then he just came detached, and fell off in the road.

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Approximately one hour later they were saying of him: "Yes, you can see him, only, of course, he's still unconscious."

So that when the Archdeacon had declared "That settles it" he had been absolutely wrong. The truth was it had all begun again.

II.

THIS much may be said for Barry. He had had the creditable horse-sense to crash outside the Nursing Home at which Joyce Hedley was a member of the staff. He had been conveyed there reverently, and Joyce herself had taken charge of him. Normally that would have been a very acceptable surprise for anybody on first waking up; but Barry kept his eyes shut.

Time passed and he knew nothing of what he was missing, offering only incoherent answers to the pertinent inquiries of the doctor during fitful intervals when his eves blinked like a camera shutter. Fortunately he had a head like a bullet, and his injuries, so far as could be diagnosed, were not irreparable. Only one never knows about the brain. He had been abjectly knocked out, concussed in fact, and Joyce, who spent more time than anybody waiting for him to revive, and looked down at him in whimsical surprise, could not help wondering why he had come down that hill at such a hectic speed, where he had been going, and what was up between him and his fond papa.

For there had called the Archdeacon and his wife.

They had tiptoed to the bed and had inspected him with something of the awed interest a child shows in a dead cat.

"He might have been more careful," said his mother. "He knows how these upsets affect me."

"I don't suppose he knew how this one would affect him anyhow," said Joyce.

"And it all comes," said the Archdeacon, as though reciting Struwelpeter, "from defiance. Very sad."

Whereupon he had been gradually pulled out by the coat-tails. Joyce had dispatched them and retired upstairs again. Then, in a little while, arrived two further callers, this time a mother and her daughter. Joyce eyed this couple with a shrewd suspicion, suddenly beginning to deduce the facts. The mother was a patroness of everyone she met; the daughter was a plain girl whose clothes were repellently expensive without suiting her.

"My name is Mrs. Moffham," said the mother, not without self-satisfaction. "We are friends, great friends, of the Archdeacon, and my daughter naturally is most concerned. If his eyes should open whilst she is at his side I have no doubt that it would do him good great good."

do him good, great good."

"That can be said," thought Joyce sig-

nificantly, "of all emetics."

"Shall we," said Mrs. Moffham, "go up?"
She spoke as the holder of a complimentary ticket to Heaven might address the pilot. Joyce went patiently ahead. She did not believe in hitting a man when he was down, and she decided that if Barry opened even one eye in the next ten minutes she would snap it to again with a gentle finger out of human sympathy, and she was not surprised to know the daughter's name was Agnes.

They inspected Barry with a nice distinction as between distress and disapproval of his surroundings, notably, she supposed, herself

The daughter smoothed the sheets once in a limp way, looked at Barry with a feeble interest, said nothing, and stood back for her mother, who ran her finger round the bedstead and looked on it for dust. Joyce obstinately made herself a sentry over Barry's head and watched them round the room when they at last departed. Agnes had her bag held to her heart and looked back over her shoulder once so that her chin completely vanished into her neck.

JOYCE saw them off the premises grimly, then she looked at the time.

She had missed her off-duty turn yester-day through Barry, and she was going to take it now, leaving him in another's charge. She went to take one further, thoughtful look at him, and smoothed his rebellious hair back with one hand. Having seen Agnes, she was not surprised he had taken that despairing high dive for her feet at sight. It had been sheer bad luck that he had missed the hem of her skirt and got the lamp-post.

Presently she was changing.

She stepped into the short skirt of a suit and drew it to the proper setting at her waist, then stood regarding herself in the mirror gravely; she had a lax grace due to long limbs and a supple frame; her tawny hair had come adrift a little, and that preposterously willing mouth smiled back at her from the glass.

Soon she was gone, and it was only when she had left the house that Barry, the ass, decided to come to.

III.

I T may be true that the whole medical profession are defeated by the common cold, but what they know the least about appears to be the brain. Concussion plays quaint tricks upon a man. It lets him go on playing football whilst unconscious. It permits him to get up after a railway accident and walk away apparently unhurt and lose himself, then suddenly fall dead next day. And all that sort of thing. Most odd. Take Barry. He had lain in a coma for twenty-four hours, and suddenly he just sat up.

His first regret was that he was going to be sick; his next that he was not. He rose perplexedly and painfully on one elbow, thinking that he had overslept after a thick night, and started getting out of bed in a disgruntled frame of mind but in a hurry. And then he checked, struck by the fact that this was not his room, and so remained, half between the sheets and half out, staring. He looked all round him, at the ceiling, at the windows, at the walls, the furniture. No one was here to tell him anything. He flopped back with his face all puckered like a string bag. Was he away for the week-end? Where the deuce——?

He suddenly bethought him of the window and he rose and stood on bare feet, swaying slightly; he inspected his pyjamas critically and with the distaste of intoxication; they were a ghastly pattern, like a sun-blind. Not his, definitely. Had he been sand-bagged—robbed—or was he dead? He went uncertainly to the window, and looked dully out. To his astonishment he recognised the view; it was as though someone had sent him a picture postcard of the very place he was at. "Why...this...," he muttered, "this is Clumpton."

He turned again, peered at the door, then reeled back to the bed and sat upon it, with his fingers in his hair, for, as would be the case with most of us in a similar predicament, he badly wanted to find out what was the matter, yet was frightened of making a fool of himself. Surely there was something he was supposed to know and didn't? He got rather annoyed. Then his hand went up tentatively and felt his head. found a lump, pressed it as though it were a bell-push and was conscious of a responsive buzzing in his head. And whilst he was deciding not to do that again because it hurt, the door opened suddenly and a girl stood there, a girl in spectacles, a pleasantlooking girl but plain, a girl in uniform. Now he was quite sure there was some conspiracy afoot; he did not see how by pressing that lump on his head he could possibly have really rung a bell; yet he had certainly heard one, and now here was a maid or something. She was staring at him.

"Can I have," he said, "my shaving

water?"

The girl still stared, then came determinedly forward.

"I would like with it," said Barry, "a

daily paper, please."

It had occurred to him that with luck he might see in it some paragraph describing what had happened to him, and thus put one over on the combine of thugs who had deposited him here.

"Awake, eh?" said the nurse with brisk

good cheer. "You must get into bed, you know. I'll call the doctor."

"What place," demanded Barry, putting out an inquisitive finger, "is this?"

"You're in a nursing home. You've had an accident. You must lie absolutely still. Get into bed, now, please."

"Accident. What sort of accident?"

"A bicycle accident."

Barry looked disgusted.

"Why, what should I be doing on a bicycle?"

The nurse waved this aside, and came and bundled him between the sheets.

"Now, lie quite still," she said, "and I will fetch the doctor. We've been waiting for you to wake up."

He watched her go, and lay back with a philosophic air of bland detachment. As he puzzled over it, and battled with his memory, it began to come back to him by degrees.

By Jove, yes, he had been on a bicycle. That was the last thing he remembered. There had been another infernal row at home. He was sick of Agnes being foisted on him. Yes, that was it. His father and mother, and the father and mother of Agnes had conspired to make the father and mother of a row, and he detested Agnes. This was a country place, too, where it was impossible to avoid people. He had complained about it more than once. The day of arranged marriages was past. He had said so. Forcefully. And there had been recriminations. "You want me to marry," he had said, "someone I don't like. How would you like it if I went and married someone you don't like? How would you like me to go off and marry, say, Miss Dimmer?"

Ah, a shrewd thrust that. With a slight smile he remembered now the excellent effect produced. For they had already sacked Miss Dimmer. She had been his father's secretary, and she was pretty; one of the prettiest girls, he supposed, in Clumpton. And because of that they hadn't trusted her, hadn't trusted him, had made an excuse and sacked her, and she had left. They had made a ridiculous mistake, because there was nothing between Miss Dimmer and himself except fresh air; she was a jolly girl, and they had now and then exchanged light badinage and persiflage, and all that sort of thing. But he had never kissed her. She was not that sort. And yet they had suspected "goings-on" and somebody had started something spiteful, and they had dragged in Agnes Moffham as usual. Yes, he had fairly gone for them. "How would

vou like it if I went off and married Miss Dimmer?" Their faces had looked stiff and bulbous and flaming like electric light bulbs, and they had said: "That is exactly why Miss Dimmer went. She was setting her cap at you." That had done it. It was so flagrantly untrue. "Was she?" he had said. "By Jove, I wish I'd known that. I would have chanced my luck." He hadn't really meant it, only he was furiously angry, and they had said: "It isn't luck you want to marry a girl like Miss Dimmer. It's money. Which is what you've got. And well she knows it." He had flung out and got his bicycle. He had meant to ride into Clumpton and find Miss Dimmer then and there. And that was all he remembered.

So he had had an accident, had he? He began to feel his legs and arms to make sure he was all complete, but he had only got thus far when the doctor appeared. It was his own doctor, a young man and agreeable. He entered briskly, came to the bedside and

began.

Pulse first, then cross-examination.

"How's the head now, thick or clear?"
Barry was cautious. Was the man being funny or was this a reference to diet. He was silent for a moment, then tried to sit up, but the doctor gently pushed him down again.

"I have been remembering," said Barry slowly, "where I was going. Tell me, has anybody called? Does anybody know I'm

here? "

"Oh yes, your father and mother . . . and Mrs. Moffham. . . ."

This time Barry sat up insistently.

His jaw crept out.

"You mean to say they brought that Agnes here?"

He tried to button up his pyjama jacket to the top.

"That settles it," said he. "Doctor, I wish to send a message."

And he sent a message to Miss Dimmer, asking her to come at once. "Say that I asked for her in my first waking moment... and tell my father that when next he calls."

The doctor smiled and felt his bumps and

listened to him with a stethoscope.

"He seems all right," he told the matron.

"It will only worry him if this girl doesn't come. You'd better send for her."

IV.

M ISS DIMMER was at home. She was in far from pleasant humour. Ever since she had left her post her mother had been criticising her behaviour and she

was even now upbraiding her.

"You have," she said, "only yourself to thank." (Long sniff.) "A good post . . . and the opportunity to make a splendid match. Surely there were ways in which you could have made yourself attractive to the son without arousing the suspicion of the parents in that silly way." (Folded arms. A doubling chin.) "Ridiculous. Absurd. The whole chance ruined. The man had money and position, and in a town like this what other chances are there?"

Miss Dimmer rose indignantly.

"Will you be quiet about it? Will you? Isn't it bad enough without you rubbing it in the whole time, arguing what I should have done, and what I shouldn't . . . and the whys and wherefores, and the ways and means. I've left . . ."

She had "set her cap" and lost. The backward youth had never even kissed her. She was disappointed and incensed.

The front-door bell rang suddenly.

Her mother went. She came back with a

strange expression.

"Darling! Mr. Barry Chitlow," she said in a coy and girlish whisper, and with brightening eyes, "has had an accident . . . and he has sent for you, my dear, for you . . . they want you at the Nursing Home at once."

Archdeacon Chitlow hurried from his telephone and found his wife.

"He's coming round. He has revived. They have just telephoned to say so. And he has asked immediately for Miss Dimmer."

"You mean to say they have rung up right in the middle of dinner? Really, I do think people might be more considerate," said Mrs. Chitlow flatly. "Well, you had better go, whilst I get ready, and telephone immediately to Agnes. She will want to be there, naturally."

So, whilst Joyce sat in the pictures, Barry lay in bed making plans, Miss Dimmer was changing into another frock, Agnes was being bullied by her mother to make speed, and the Archdeacon and his wife were pulling on their gloves.

Joyce could not be seen to the best advantage in the dark, but you will know how she looked in a soft hat and a raincoat . . . a good girl who had been unfairly treated by the fairies at her birth, and given tawny hair and a seductive mouth, solely to make life difficult.

V.

PARRY lay waiting for Miss Dimmer. He was amused at himself although his head ached. He liked to conjecture how this would make his parents think. He liked to think how she would come into the room, all in a flutter, and how he would graciously receive her, saying, "Sit there, Miss Dimmer. There is something I want to say to you."

voices in the hall. They were the voices of his parents!

He was horrified. He simply could not stand another row. He meant to make a neat move and await the consequences; he did not wish to see anybody but Miss Dimmer. Would the staff have the sense to pack his people off? Whilst he waited nervously he heard another car draw up outside. He rose very cautiously, tip-



He lifted his head about four inches from the pillow and stayed rigid. There were toed to the window and looked down. Great Heavens, it was the car of Mrs. Moffham. Agnes was getting out of it!

He whizzed round and stared like a hunted fugitive, tense and expectant of the worst. He could not possibly support it. He must seek protection. They would all come up



Barry, would definitely have had the last word.

He could see no dressing-gown to hand, and no clothes.

He opened the door of his room, crept out as he was and peered over the banisters, with eyes shining like stiletto points. Voices filled the hall. The agitated voices of his parents and the Moffhams! He turned back, hurried to his bed, and rang the bell. His head was splitting; he was giddy and a bit confused, but conscious anyhow. He scrambled into bed and when the nurse appeared he made his wishes known.

"If that's my people, and the Moffhams, send them up. Do, please. And then, when they're all here . . . send up Miss Dimmer."

There came another ringing at the front-door bell, and he stayed with his hand clapped to his temple. What with bells ringing in his head and others pealing through the house, really this was awful. He arranged his pillow with a sigh and sat back comfortably.

GRAVE procession made its way upstairs.

First came Barry's mother, ready to protest at once against her son's continual thoughtlessness. Then the Archdeacon, clearing his throat and holding the lapel of his coat. Then Mrs. Moffham, with considerable importance, and at the tail-end Agnes, and though the tail was going up it was far from wagging.

Miss Dimmer sat alone in the hall, pretty and business-like and rather cocky; the others turned at the landing to look down at her as though to make a rude grimace.

The door of Barry's room was opened. They filed in, each with his or her particular line all ready on the tip of the tongue, and then in turn each struck an attitude portraying great surprise.

There, certainly, was Barry's bed, the

sheets thrown back.

But Barry was entirely absent.

The nurse who had escorted them, and who had held the door, pushed past and registered her own especial shock.

In another moment there was babel.

Barry had gone!

VI.

JOYCE saw the last film through and rose. It had made a break in the day, but she was quite pleased to be going back. She had an interesting patient. She strolled through Clumpton, reached the Nursing

Home, went up the steps, and let herself in with a key. At once she stopped. The hall was full of anxious-looking people. They were all talking at once, and now that she appeared they all turned and looked at her fiercely. Not one seemed to like the look of her. Their eyes went up and down, taking her in, summing her up, and then the matron, harassed and very cross with everyone, made her way out from the group and drew Joyce to one side.

"Your patient has vanished, Nurse. All these people have come to see him, and he

isn't there."

Joyce was always calm. She looked no less efficient in that raincoat and crush hat than in the uniform of every day. She looked about these visitors and seemed to take their names and numbers, then pursed her lips as though to say: "I'm not surprised, poor boy." But Barry's mother fluttered forward.

"He roused this evening, and sent for my husband's secretary, who has already left our service. Of course she is here, but it is quite unnecessary for him to see her, and he must have realised that, afterwards . . ."

"P'raps he's gone out," said Joyce.

Here the Archdeacon interrupted.

"How could he go out in pyjamas? What would he say to people in the street?"

Joyce offered him her most bewitching

smile. "He could say he was on his way to a

fancy dress dance. I should."

The mental image of Joyce in pyjamas explaining herself in the main street of Clumpton was one that might have appealed to some people but not to the Archdeacon. He looked at her severely over his spectacles.

"Do you assert," demanded Mrs. Moffham, breaking in vitally, "that it would be simple for a patient to walk out of here, unobserved . . . in any sort of garb he

liked?"

"I don't say it would be simple," said Joyce, "but there is not always a nurse on the stairs, and anyone can open a door. If he has roused, he may not be quite sure what he's doing."

"Considering that he sent for me," said a pert voice from the back, "I should say he's

quite sure."

Joyce was momentarily perplexed; she could not quite place Miss Dimmer, but she smiled again, and turned to the matron, who also had something to say.

"He must be in the place, Nurse. He rang a moment beforehand, and Nurse Whit-

taker spoke to him. He was in bed then. She came downstairs and when she took these people up he was gone. They are looking for him now."

"Is he under the bed?" asked Joyce.

"Under the bed?" Several people spoke at once this time, and they were all horrified. But the matron answered:

"Go up and help them look for him; and really I must ask you all," she said, "to come into the waiting-room and to remain as quiet as possible. This noise is too much for a nursing home."

She herded them before her into hiding, and Joyce went alone upstairs.

Two nurses were already hurrying from room to room and trying doors. But Joyce, as kissable as ever, stood for a moment on the threshold of Barry's room and looked about her. Immediately across the passage was a small white cupboard used for linen. She reached out her hand and casually opened it.

Under the shelf was huddled a figure in impossible pyjamas, and she looked down severely.

"What," she said, "are you doing in

there ? "

There was no reply.

Barry had managed to get there and to pull the door to after him, but nothing more, and now he rolled out in a heap.

VII.

THE doctor sat by Barry's side and looked at him significantly. He held Barry's pulse in a learned way and waited.

"Well," he said, "what was the big idea? One moment you are here in bed ringing for visitors, the next you are hiding in a cupboard in the passage. You were going, I suppose, to jump out at them as they passed?"

"No," said Barry definitely. "The moment I had asked the nurse to send them up, I suddenly remembered something."

"What did you remember?"

"I remembered why I fell off that bicycle." The doctor sat back, hands in pockets.

"Well, Massa Bones," he said conversationally, "and why did you fall off that bicycle?"

"Some while ago," responded Barry, "I

was on holiday at Seagate."

"I beg your pardon?"

The doctor had leaned forward again sharply. He was now not sure whether he was having his leg pulled or whether Barry was wandering. He looked keenly at his patient.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"There was a girl there—on her holidays," said Barry simply. He had closed his eyes the better to envisage her again. With one tired hand he started to depict her in the air, much as a dress designer would suggest some new creation that was going to be too utter. "We used to swim together, and that sort of thing."

A glance at Barry told the rest. You could detect him picturing again sweet, long limbs, coffee-tanned, a white costume, the sheen of tawny hair, sodden, but drying in

the sun

"She went," said Barry, "but she gave me her address. She was a mystery, but she said I could write. She said I must write very small so that I should seem to be whispering, and I could underline some words so that she could hear what I said. And when I was packing, miserably, I lost the address."

He sat up a little, peering at the doctor

grimly.

"I tried to remember what it was, but it was a long one and the letter came back through the Dead Letter Office. I had about four other shots, but they were all returned. Dead letters like," he said romantically, "dead leaves. That was three months ago, and I gave her up for lost, just a sweet summer memory, you know. . . "

"I know," the doctor said, "I know."

He also had a heart.

"Well, yesterday," said Barry, "... Was it yesterday? ... I had an argument at home, and I was coming down that hill like smoke when suddenly ..."

"Yes?" said the doctor, greatly inter-

ested now.

"I saw her!"

" No!"

"I saw her and," said Barry fiercely, "I shoved on my brakes like anything. I fairly jammed them . . . only it was greasy, and the next thing was that I was in mid-air, then here in bed."

Barry sank back dejectedly.

"The moment I remembered that I realised I couldn't meet Miss Dimmer, and do what I meant to do. And there was nothing for it but to hide before she came upstairs."

He spread his palms apologetically.

"But evidently," said the doctor, wishing to console the man, "she's in the town?" "She may be, but I live here and I've

never seen her yet."



"You know her name?" Barry smiled gently.

"Ah . . ." He was about to roll it fondly round his tongue when the door softly opened, and he turned to see who came.

He half rose in bed. He propped himself up on one elbow, and he stared. He was hypnotised; he made a sort of choking sound. He flung out one hand, pointing vaguely, and the room began to spin. He did his best to stop it, and he clutched the doctor, who in turn clutched him. And then the room went absolutely dark again and Barry was flat on his back.

His hand was holding something; he did not know what, but it was soft and cool and clinging. He did not dare open his eyes. He reached another hand out and he met whatever he was holding, felt it tremulously and let his fingers travel up a cool arm, soft as a dream, to a round elbow, and a stiff and starchy sleeve. His hand continued climbing to a shoulder, plastic under his inquiring touch, then to a neck that had not crease or pucker or the faintest line, and so on to a rounded chin; at last his fingers touched two lips, and instantly two rows of teeth bit at his finger smartly.

Barry opened his eyes.

"I must say," said a voice, "I take it rather hard a man should swoon in this way every time he sees me."

Barry stayed, staring.

"What," he said, "was that address?" "I don't suppose it matters now," said "You didn't write, but I remembered that you lived at Clumpton, and when I had an offer to come here, I took it. thinking I might see you some time in the

Barry could not close his eyes again, for they were fascinated. They were beneath her spell. His grip of her hand tightened.

"Is anyone about? My people, Mrs. Moffham, or Miss Dimmer?"

"No. They're all packed off."

"You said," commented Barry slowly, "that you never kissed on summer holidays. You said it was too ordinary and it couldn't mean the right thing; and, you know..."

"There is one thing I don't know," Joyce remarked. "I don't quite understand your tangled threads. Who's this Miss

Dimmer?"

"She was my father's secretary."

"What did you want to ask for her for?"

"I don't know," said Barry innocently, I was wandering, I suppose. I only know

when I saw what I'd done, and heard her coming, I was terrified."

Joyce remained smiling down at him suspiciously. Her hands were on the sheet holding to his; her eyes were on his, scrutably and sedulously.

"It's three months since then," said Barry, and you said . . . if after a test of time,

I still believed . . ."

Joyce reached one hand up and felt his rough unshaven cheek inquiringly. Then with one finger she more dubiously felt hers.

"My father said," commented Barry, "Learn to take the rough with the smooth. I'm ready to begin."

Her lips were wonderful.

That settled it.

SUPPOSE . . .

SUPPOSE some mischief-making sprite Made havoc of the world by night-Re-wrote the outlines, changed the shapes Of all the continents and capes; Emptied the big Atlantic out, And changed the capitals about; Sent Oxford Street to Ararat, And squashed the Himalayas flat: And made a jumble of the whole Geography from Pole to Pole, And I could make fine paper caps Of all my atlases and maps; Or I might go to Deal and hail A boat with masts, and sail and sail And never know where I should get-To Madagascar or Tibet-Or whether London's here or there, Or anything is anywhere, As if the world had just begun-... Oh, wouldn't it be fun?

F. HANBURY.



COUNTRY CHURCHES

By GRACE NOLL CROWELL

Symbols of faith—they lift their reaching spires

Above green groves down many a country way,

And on the wide plains there are altar fires

That light the forms of those who kneel to pray.

And I have seen them stand knee-deep in wheat,

White country churches, rising from the sod.

Where men, in gratitude for bread to eat,

Have paused and reared their altars to their God.

Symbols they stand of mankind's daily need:

The urgent need to pray, the need to praise.

Without their altars, men grow blind indeed,

And grope bewildered down unlighted ways.

The look of God is over any land Where men have toiled, and where their churches stand.

HOW TO KEEP FIT

* A Series of Simple Exercises *

By Elisabeth Partington.mpc.London

Photographs by Hana, London.

In this and succeeding numbers will be given a series of exercises beneficial to both men and women, to young and old. Such exercises cannot be standardised but must be adapted to individual needs. Choose from the series those which apply to yourself and learn to execute them perfectly. A few minutes a day will suffice, but if you can give longer so much the better. Do not hurry, and above all do not overdo the exercises. Cease directly there is fatigue.

If you begin at once and make the slight effort required you will soon realise that flexibility and much else that adds to health and the enjoyment of life can be yours.

The first set may be described as Health Exercises. They will be followed by other sets designed to aid digestion, to benefit the nervous system, and to promote vitality.



IST EXERCISE

Stand with arms stretched upward, and rise as high as possible on the toes.

Practise until you can stand for five minutes in this position.

This exercise is for development of shoulders and chest, and for proper poise.



2ND EXERCISE.

Stand with heels together. Smartly raise each leg alternately in bent position with toes

pointing downwards.

For developing muscles of the hips and lower part of





3RD EXERCISE.

Let the arms swing forward and upward alternately. Left, then right.

This exercise is good for the arms and shoulders, and if continued long enough develops the chest.



4TH EXERCISE.

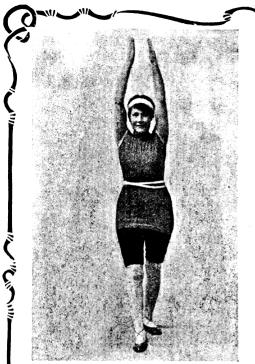
Stand with heels together, right hand on hip and left hand behind the head. Change arms as head turns. Turn the head over the shoulder of the arm which rests on the hip. Draw the opposite elbow well back, that is, in neck-rest position.



5TH EXERCISE.

Arms in an upward bent position. Bend the body to the left and to the right, at the same time pushing the arm upward over the head, keeping a straight elbow.

This exercise is for forcibly spreading and strengthening the ribs and waist-line.



6TH EXERCISE.

Swing both arms forward and upward whilst placing the right foot forward. Then bring the arms downward with feet together.

This exercise is really a foot movement, and if done smartly and correctly is corrective of the position of both legs and spine, whilst breathing at the same time corrects the carriage of the chest.



7TH EXERCISE.

Stand with heels together. Bring the right arm across the chest in a forward bent position with left arm stretched out-

Alternately fling out the arms across the chest with the head turning in the direction of the outstretched arm.

This exercise is to expand the chest and to improve the muscles of the neck.





8TH EXERCISE.

Stand with arms outstretched to shoulder-line, prl ns upward. Bring arms and body forward as illustrated in first pose, then back to starting position. Now bring arms forward and downward as in second ill istration, then back to first position. This exercise is to develop the muscles of the back, shoulder and neck; it also promotes suppleness of body.



9TH EXERCISE.

Stand with feet apart and arms outward to shoulder-ne. Bend to left and right, keeping the legs quite stiff. In this exercise the spine is curved throughout its length and not merely at one point.

The ribs are also lifted, thereby increasing chest capacity.



10TH EXERCISE.

Stand with feet apart, arms outstretched to shoulder-line. Bend and touch the ground at each side, stretching out as far as possible

without bending the knees.

This is a good stretching exercise which will give height and reduce the hips.



11th EXERCISE.

Stand with arms in forward bent position across the chest. Fling the arms outward, at the same time bending the head back-

Bend arms forward again, bringing the head forward. This exercise is for developing the arms and for making a supple It will keep you free from headaches.



12TH EXERCISE.

Stand with feet apart.

Bend the body to left and right, bringing the arm well upward under the armpits.

For making the waist muscles firm and strong, which is essential for good walking.



13TH EXERCISE.

Bring right arm well upward round the body; at the same time swing the left arm upward and turn the body to the right. Then change arms and swing body over to the left. For reducing the hips and shoulders and improving muscles weakened by belts or other artificial support.



14TH EXERCISE.

Stand with arms outward to shoulder-level and feet apart.
Swing arms far forward as shown, then raise body upward and arms outward again to first position. Specially beneficial for strengthening the muscles behind the thigh.
Continue till tired.

will be given in

next month's

issue.





15TH EXERCISE.

Stand with feet apart, arms outward. Raise arms upward, at the same time raising the heels as high as possible. Then arms back to shoulder-level and heels down.

This is for developing the muscles of the leg and strengthen-

ing a weak instep

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By J. J. BELL 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF EARLIER CHAPTERS.

ADY BALLANTYRE, an attractive young widow, is in financial difficulties through speculating in "Flossies." She is hoping that her son, Steve, whose money she has also risked, will become engaged to Winifred Charters, who has £80,000 of her own. But during a cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Ailsa Maclean, and he is arranging another trip in the *Miranda* during the following August. Luis, a young Spaniard whom Flora had "mothered" in boyhood, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father's papers had made reference.

Lady Ballantyre, secretly ashamed, gets Luis to sell pictures and heirlooms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parch-

ment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory.

Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the Miranda party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa. After a dinner-party, Hector dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it.

Luis discovers beyond doubt that his secretary in Spain has been tampering with Lady Ballantyre's letters. Possibly Muñez has already informed the Church authorities of the impending treasure hunt,

and the persuasion of Hector Maclean will be but the first of a series of difficulties.

Maclean eventually agrees to uncover the well, giving out as pretext that he has hopes of establishing a "sodda-water" factory. If the jewels are found he will claim fifty per cent of the proceeds on Ailsa's behalf, Luis and Lady Ballantyre can keep the remainder. Meanwhile, to divert suspicion, the Mirandu is to continue her cruise.

Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, is much puzzled by the presence at Tobermory of a mysterious foreigner with a fast motor launch, especially when he discovers that M. Dracquier is sending

telegrams to Spain and hanging about in Hector's garden at dusk.

Unknown to Luis, Lady Ballantyre has continued her speculations, but from a carelessly sealed telegram handed to him by mistake, he discovers her deceit. Steve, who is addicted to drink, one evening finds Ailsa talking intimately to Luis and wearing an aquamarine pendant with which Lady Ballantyre, at the Spaniard's instigation, has presented her. In a fit of jealousy, Steve blurts out, "Before you accept his presents, Ailsa, you should ask him to tell you about the girl in the mountains of Spain and the man he murdered there, two years ago."

The well having been cleared by workmen, Ronald at night goes down under the water and after much probing brings up the jewel casket. But, unknown to the searchers, M. Dracquier, through a slit in the boarded window, has seen all, and only seeks a favourable opportunity to make a dash for the treasure and bolt to the motor launch that awaits him in the bay. Meanwhile Ronald prepares to put off to the

Miranda with news of his success.

"Piff," says Hector, "that Miss Charters with her fine long legs and her eighty thousand pounds! Ailsa will be getting a million pounds or so. It is going to be a great night for everybody."

XX.

Y ten-thirty on the night of Steve's outbreak the salaan and the s was in darkness. There had been no bridge, no music, and everybody had made some sort of excuse for retiring early. Lady Ballantyre would fain have had a word with Luis concerning the morrow, but he had said "Good night" with the others, and in so decided a manner that nothing was left to her but to follow the girls downstairs, conscious of a new unhappiness, which was scarcely mitigated by the remembrance of her son's subdued manner when he came in from the deck with Winifred, shortly after ten o'clock, and his neglect of the spirit tray.

There is a loneliness which craves to be alone in the open, and for which the open is never wide, nor dark, enough. From the saloon Luis went forward, past his cabin and Steve's, which was lighted, and mounted the ladder to the bridge.

The air was warm now, since the sharp breeze had failed, after, as it seemed, sweeping the sky clean. For the song of a joyous heart the stars were a crowded audience, but this was the voidest and blackest of nights for the man deceived and betrayed by the two, mother and son, who had mattered more than all others to his life. Thus wounded, nothing, Luis imagined, could hurt him more; nothing could heal. His feelings towards Steve were cold rather than bitter; he could not deny that by his attentions to Ailsa he had provoked, though alcohol had produced, the outbreak. But towards his Lady—his Lady still—they were those of faith mocked, love humiliated. She had used him, yet had not trusted him. His chief wish now was that the morrow, or the day after, might see the end, one way or the other, of this unhappy, unholy jewel hunt. Then he would go back to Spain and-well, this was not the first time he had entertained thoughts of a monastery.

It was long after midnight when, the weariness of the flesh asserting itself, he descended and made his way to his cabin. Letting himself in, he switched on the light.

Steve was standing there.

Luis stiffened; his face hardened. He threw the door wide, saying, "Have you mistaken the cabin?" Next moment his attitude relaxed, the harsh look faded, and he closed the door quietly. For this was not the Steve who had betrayed him. Surely this was the Steve who, once, had been as a younger brother.

Steve wet his lips. "I came into your room like this," he said, "because I was afraid that, once you were in it, you would not let me in. I know that nothing I can say will make any difference, but I want to tell you that I'm dreadfully ashamed of myself and sorry beyond words. I—I went lower than I ever imagined a man could go. How I could have done what I did,

Luis put up his hand. "You did not do it."

The other stared; then—" I see what you mean. You are merciful. Of course I was not quite——"

"You did not do it—and so there is no more to be said." Luis took out and proffered his cigarette-case. "If you are not in a hurry—"

Again the younger man stared, then sat down on the couch and put his hands to his face.

"Luis," he whispered, "I think you must be a saint!"

At that Luis gave a laugh. "When the devil was sick—" he muttered to himself.

Aloud—"I am glad you came in, Steve. I have been thinking over things, and find I shall have to go back to Spain almost immediately. My affairs—"

immediately. My affairs——''
Steve sat up. "I knew something was worrying you! Look here—don't be vexed with me—but, as I said once before, if it's money——"

"Thank you, Steve; but I have as much money as I need. One of my reasons for going back is that my secretary is not looking after things properly—at least, that is my suspicion. And perhaps I'm not, after all, so English as I thought I was." Smiling, he once more proffered the case.

Steve took a cigarette, saying, "How long do you think you will be away? I don't know what Mother wants to do about the yacht at the end of this month, but she can have it for September if she wants it—and September is a lovely cruising month."

"When I go, I shall say farewell to the Miranda. You have matches? Right! My object in telling you this is that I want your promise of a letter, once a month, so that I may not lose touch with you all——"

"Once a month? That means that you are not coming back for some time!"

"Yes." Luis took a seat on his bed. There was silence till Steve, looking embarrassed, said: "Don't think me impertinent, Luis, but have I anything to

do with this?"
"Nothing!"

"Or-or Ailsa?"

"Nothing whatever! By the way, Steve, in the morning you will meet Miss Ailsa—as usual. Last night does not count. No, my going home—I mean, to Spain—is, as they so beautifully express it in England, my own funeral; and I, accordingly, am chief mourner."

"I'm pretty sure you are not! Honestly, it's a blow to me, and it will be a blow to Mother. Is there no way out?"

"None—but don't speak to anyone about it for the present. I have your promise about writing?"

"Of course—but I don't understand you, Luis. After what I did to you, a few hours ago——"

"No more."

There was another silence till Steve, ruddy, said: "I want to tell you something.... Winifred and I are engaged." Ile hung his head, or he would have seen the other's start of surprise, followed by a smile.

Luis got to his feet and held out his hand,

"That is great news-splendid news! You are a lucky man, Steve!"

"I-I've been an awful ass lately-"

"But all has come right, all is well!" Steve looked up. "I've thought you didn't quite admire Winifred-

"Ah, you do not know distant reverence when you see it, my friend! I will confess that I have been, perhaps, a little afraid of

"I assure you," Steve broke in, and surely there was something manly in his voice, "she is the most wonderful and generous girl in the world! And how she can possibly care for a chap like me-oh, it simply beats me!"

"She knows you," said Luis, and went back to his seat. "You have not told your mother vet?"

"I will tell her in the morning." "You will make her happy."

"Yes-she is fond of Winifred. . . . Mother has not seemed awfully happy lately—have you noticed it? But none of us has seemed awfully happy since the Miranda left Oban—have you noticed that, too ? "

"Possibly we have all been a bit distrait, but—joy cometh with the morning." Luis glanced at his watch. "Two o'clock."

At the door, Steve gripped his friend's hands. "Luis, I wish to God I could serve you in some way," he stammered, and went quickly to his cabin.

M ORNING came, veiled and breathless and warm. Not long after breakfast Lady Ballantyre beckoned Luis to the empty saloon.

"You know about Steve and Winifred," "Oh, Luis, she said, the blue eyes ashine.

what can I say to you?"

"Say you are pleased—happy." "I am, I am! And to you I owe it!"

"Lady, I wish that were true; then I should be among the gods—the benevolent ones. But I congratulate you, not only on your happiness, but on your judgment. Within a week I have seen my foolish little sentiments broken and scattered. Miss Winifred is the girl for Steve, and I admit it gladly. Do we sail soon?"

The abruptness of the question drew her close regard. "Yes, immediately," she answered. "You are restless, too? Well, anything is better than gazing at one scene, and we shall be sailing all day, the captain tells me. By the way, there is no post office near to the place where we are going to lie to-night."

"Does that greatly matter?"

"Only that my cousin, if he has news for us, will have to send it by boat. . . . There may be some letters at the Tobermory post office."

"There are not so many letters written that cannot keep for a day or two." His eyes, which had been surveying the misty cliffs, returned to her face. "So far, Lady. you have not had much of a holiday."

"You mean my correspondence? Perhaps I have not been sorry to have had distraction from—the other thing. Do you know, I feel as though we had been on board the Miranda for months!"

"Yes, the suspense has been hard on you. But it must now be nearly over. Soon you will know-" He paused.

"The worst?"—a faint laugh.
"Or the best." He spoke in the indifferent tone that had already hurt her.

"Luis, don't you want the jewels to be found?" she said plaintively, and he was not proof against the shadow in her eyes.

"With all my heart, I wish they may be found. Forgive me. I am dull this morning. But I shall not be satisfied till I see you looking at the ugly little things."

" Ugly?

"Are you expecting to see a heap of sparkling, dazzling gems?"

"What ought I to expect?"

He told her what he imagined, ending with, "But they will be precious stones, for all that."

"It will be wonderful to see them!"

"And to own a share of them!" She gave a shiver.

"Cold, Lady?"

"I had the thought that—that—oh, nothing! Oh, I wish I could do without them."

"There is no reason why you should do without them. For once you have them -" He halted.

"What then, Luis?"

He smiled. "Why, then you will live

happy ever after!" 'I don't understand you," she said, and turned away to speak to the captain, who

was about to take his place on the bridge. She did not again see Luis alone—he was making himself vastly entertaining to Ailsa —till rather late in the evening, when the Miranda lay at anchor in Loch Drumbuie, that lovely little inlet, with its guardian isle of Oronsay. She sent her maid to ask him to come to her "office." The maid found him on deck, with Ailsa, engaged in chaffing the lovers, and his departure meant leaving Steve, still a subdued young man, to make what he could of a somewhat embarrassing situation. It may be that Ailsa, though not usually a malicious young person, obtained a mild satisfaction from his awkwardness and from Winifred's ill-disguised anxiety—fancy Winifred the least thing anxious!—till, with some vague excuse, she drifted away.

Luis followed the maid, wondering if the mate, lately returned in the launch from Tobermory, had brought news from Maclean, though his destination had been simply the post office. He entered the cabin, wishing

once more that it were all over.

Lady Ballantyre looked up from the

writing-table.

"Sit down, Luis. Smoke, if you want to. A mail has come "—she did not mention telegrams, but he noticed the edge of a pinkish paper among the white ones—"and the mate seems to have overlooked a letter for you. He is inclined to be careless, that man. Here it is. . . . Read it now, if you wish, in case it wants a reply. I'm sending the mate back to Tobermory, with a mail, in half an hour."

He glanced at the envelope, hesitated, and put it in his pocket. Afterwards he was glad he had done so. "It is from my secretary, and I do not suppose it is anything urgent. Was there anything else you wished to see me about?"

"Of course there was. You surely do not imagine I would have called you from Ailsa on so small a pretext!" Then her archness vanished. "Yes, there is something else, Luis."

"From your cousin?"

"No; from my banker in London. He advises me of the receipt of a remittance from your bank in Spain of a sum I am ashamed to name——"

"I wish you would not speak about—"
"I must!" She extended her hand across the table. "Luis, your goodness is breaking me. It is nothing but goodness all the time. Do you know that from tonight I do not owe Steve a penny?"

"That," he said carefully, "is excellent news. But I should tell you that some of my old rubbish has brought amazingly high

prices.'

"I'm glad—but I can't help wondering whether you have anything left for your-self."

"Oh, lots-any amount, Lady."

There was a pause till she said: "You may have noticed that I have given up attempting to thank you."

"Believe me, I am grateful."

"You are formal," she said. "Won't you even touch the hand I have been

offering so long?"

"I was wondering if I might dare," he replied, and, shutting his eyes to the lovely naked arm, raised her fingers to his lips. The breath he drew at that moment was near to a sob. He was pale. "Yes, Lady," he said, sitting back and taking a cigarette, "to-night we are both happier about Steve; in every way."

"I feel like telling him what you have

done."

"Never that!" he said sharply.

"As you wish-always."

The blue eyes were downcast. Absently, maybe, her fingers moved the white papers over the edge of a broker's contract note. It had been another good day for "Flossies." They had fluctuated, but had finished firm, with a half-crown advance. Oh, that the sixpences had been pounds, so that she might, once and for all, have abandoned her desire for the jewels!

"I wonder, Luis," she said very slowly, if there is going to be happiness for me,

after all."

The pathos in her voice went to his heart. He did not forget the deception, but it seemed to matter less. He did not forget anything that stood between them, but again, as on that black and silver night in Tobermory Bay, no barrier seemed quite insurmountable.

"It is a sweet night, Lady," he said. "Would you not come on deck for a little while?"

"In five minutes. I must write one letter; the others can wait.... Do you know, it is the first time you have asked me?"

He went upstairs with a throb at his heart. Never had she appeared so lovely, so dear, so desirable.

He was stepping out of the deck-house when he recollected the letter in his pocket, and turned back into the empty saloon. With his ivory cutter he slit the envelope.

Another envelope, slightly smaller, was inside, and presently he saw that it was marked "Private and Personal." For a space he gazed at it, then, still methodically, opened it. He read:

"SIR,-

I have to inform you that the girl, Serafina Gomez, is dead, and, with much regret, have to add that on her death-bed she confessed to perjury. As yet your house has had no visitation from agents of the authorities, but such a visitation, I fear, is bound to come. Meanwhile, it is my duty to

A smashing blow, the deadliest yet. All was ended. Hope would not rise again. Truly, the pen is mightier than the sword.

He was sitting with closed eyes—how to meet his Lady now?—when Ailsa came in.



"He was sitting with closed eyes when Ailsa came in. 'Señor, are you not well?' She saw the letter in his hand. 'Have you some bad news?'"

inform you of the unfortunate circumstance and to await your commands.

Your obedient servant, GASPAR MUÑEZ.

Luis had had a premonition of something unpleasant, but of nothing so dire as this.

"Señor, are you not well?" She saw the letter in his hand. "Have you some bad news?"

"It is not good news," he said gravely—he was past smiling now—as he rose, putting away the fatal thing, "and I should like

to forget about it. Shall we have some music?"

"You will excuse my saying it," she gently replied, "but you are not looking fit for music—or anything. My father would be for giving you a wee dram. May I ring——?"

"No, no, Miss Ailsa. With all respect to your good father, a little music will help me more than a lot of wee drams.

Really, I want it."

"Oh, very well." She took off her light wrap and went over to the piano. "I am very, very sorry you are so troubled. What would you like to play?" She gave him the "A."

"Oh, anything, Miss Ailsa." He was tuning his violin hurriedly, his glance on the staircase beyond the open door.

Said Ailsa softly: "Maybe—though I am rather afraid of it—you would like to have the 'Ave Maria.'"

He checked an exclamation. "On the contrary," he replied, "I should like some dance music."

And it was dance music that greeted Lady Ballantyre's ears as she came out of her cabin. Near the top of the stairs she halted, looking into the saloon, and waited—waited for quite a long while. . . . Then she went down again.

There was not much room on the deck, but Steve and Winifred found it sufficient for their dancing. Listening and watching, you would have said then that Happiness was at last come on board the Miranda—that is, supposing you had ignored the hostess in her cabin and the eyes of Luis de Lara.

M IDNIGHT was at hand when Lady Ballantyre came up to the saloon, where the four young people were now gathered. The musicians had been playing, with brief rests, all the time, though dance music had long ago given place to other sorts. Luis had come upon a volume of Schubert's songs.

"That was a lovely thing," Winifred was remarking as Lady Ballantyre entered.

"The Señor was telling me," said Ailsa, "that Schubert sold it for tenpence."

"Oh, what a fool!"

"Yes, but if Schubert had asked for a shilling, we might not be having the pleasure now, Miss Charters."

"Even men who are fools have their uses," said Luis. "Ah, Lady Ballantyre, you have come to order us to bed."

She was looking a little worn, but she

answered cheerfully enough: "Yes, Señor. You hear the word before it is spoken! For once, I feel that I ought to use my matronly authority. Ailsa, you must be tired. You have been playing for hours."

"Sorry," murmured Luis.

"I'm not a bit tired," Ailsa quickly declared. "I am never tired—till the morning."

"You greet the dawn with a yawn,"

suggested Miss Charters.

"If the truth were known," Luis observed, "our greatest nature poets have done that regularly. But I agree with Lady Ballantyre. After that wonderful sail to-day, we ought to sleep soundly. Let me show a good example by saying 'good night.'"

A LITTLE later, he was leaning on the rail, alone in the great dark silence. At first his posture hinted at sheer lassitude, but presently, and suddenly, it betokened alert attention. He was peering into the night when Lady Ballantyre came to his side.

" Luis!"

"Yes?" he returned gently, if curtly.

"Luis, if the jewels are there, I do not

"Hush, Lady! Listen! A motor-boat is coming yonder. . . . If it is a message from your cousin, it must be good news. Is the captain prepared to sail at the shortest notice?"

"Yes; but Hector would never summon us at this hour."

"Who can say? He would think of his daughter... Excuse me. There is a night-glass in the box on the bridge."

At the end of an age, as it seemed to Lady

Ballantyre, he came back.

"The boat is coming this way, and it is a white one."

Her hand was at her breast. "Luis, I—I'm praying that it may not be from Hector. Oh, believe me when I say that I——"

He forgot everything save his own unhappiness.

"How can I believe you?" he said, and left her.

I was near to two o'clock when the Miranda, a pale, luminous ghost, slipped into Tobermory Bay. Wakeful eyes saw her come. Not far behind her followed the white motor-boat.

Father Macdonald, half dozing at the window, was roused by the rumble of the yacht's anchor-cable. As a man familiar

with those perilous coasts and reef-strewn seas, he wondered at such night sailing for a pleasure craft. Dimly he discerned the motor-boat go alongside and, after a short wait, make for the shore. Clearly he saw it reach the jetty and disembark six persons, all oddly silent. They came up to the road, almost beneath his window, and turned in the direction of Maclean's house.

What had happened to bring every member of the yachting party ashore at two o'clock in the morning? Wide awake now, he wondered and wondered. . . . And had he wondered a thought less, and acted a minute earlier, the night might

have ended very differently.

Shoes in hand, he switched off the light, quietly left his room, and cautiously felt his way downstairs, guided to some extent by the faint bluish glimmer above the hotel door. Setting his teeth, he slowly drew back the bolt and turned the big key. . . . Safely outside, he resumed his shoes and, avoiding the pavement, though on rubber soles, followed in the track of the yachting party, which ere now, he calculated, must have reached the house.

Calling himself a fool for his pains, if not for his curiosity, he proceeded quickly along the level, and quickly up the hill, till his breathing interfered. Why such haste? He could not have answered the question. On reaching the summit he paused, and there an idea came to him. Something had befallen his friend Maclean -could it have been at the hands of that suspicious Spaniard?—and the daughter and friends had been hurriedly summoned. Should be go on? In one respect, and an important one, he was an outsider, who might receive less than scant welcome. On the other hand, he might, possibly, be able to serve in some way. . . . Of a sudden he decided, and broke into a trot that lasted till he was at the gate.

At a reduced pace he entered the garden. The back of the house was in darkness, but at the end of the wing a beam escaped the curtains of the side-window of the dining-room window. Turning the corner, he noted that the curtains of the front window had been more effectually closed. He came to the porch. The fanlight above the door was black, and he hesitated to ring. Drawing back, he looked this way and that. The darkness was not such that his sight could not reach a fair distance.

Abruptly he noticed that the window of the hall on his right appeared to be wide open. He stepped quietly along to it. A voice, which he recognised as Maclean's though no words were distinguishable, drifted to his ears. That was a relief! Nothing, after all—nothing of a very serious nature, anyway—had befallen his friend. And now, ought not he to retire?

But curiosity persisted. Why was the blank window unprotected? Even in so secluded a place that seemed odd. And were they still working at the well? Taking advantage of the garden seat, he raised himself to the opening, and listened. Why, Maclean was making a speech—a speech at two o'clock in the morning!—yet never a sound from the others. He bent forward and looked into the hall.

His gaze was at once, and naturally, attracted to the dining-room door by the band of light at its bottom.

He caught his breath.

Against the door was standing a tall black figure, motionless, its back to the window and himself, its cheek, apparently, to the panel.

XXI.

THOUGH his whole experience of the theatre was contained in a long-ago visit to the Glasgow Pantomime, Hector Maclean was possessed of quite theatrical ideas. Hints of these have already been given, vaguely or otherwise, in the course of those little scenes in the saloon of the Miranda and in his office, also in the dismantled hall of his house, when he decided to call, as it were, an emergency meeting in the depths of night.

And now he had fairly given way to the instinct. On sighting, at last, from his bedroom window, the lights of the Miranda rounding the point to enter the bay, he descended to the dining-room and switched on every lamp. In the thoroughbred Highlander tradition and custom die only when life is dead, and he began by setting out on the sideboard a hospitable array of decanters and glasses, not forgetting siphons of sodda." To these he added an fashioned plated biscuit-box and an ornate cake-basket, the stale contents of which were certain to reduce Ailsa to tears of shame, when she came to notice them. Partly to add to the air of festivity, partly for his own future convenience, he removed from the centre of the table the large elaborate crystal of cut flowers, which Kate had overlooked for a week, and placed it among the decanters, arranging them with

mathematical precision around it. He then stood back and for the space of a minute surveyed with pride his handiwork. He could have done with "a wee dram," but shook his head at the temptation.

At the table he set chairs to the number of his expected guests. The table was a new one, of Ailsa's choice, with a beautifully polished top, of which, because of its "nakedness," he secretly disapproved, yearning for a rich plush cover, though tonight it seemed well enough for his purpose. He had done some thinking, and his preparations were complete. The materials lay ready in the adjoining office.

First, he covered that half of the table which was the more distant from the door with a twice-folded bedspread of floral design, which, as the most likely thing available, he had taken from the spare room. Upon its gay surface, towards the left, he set two large basins, one half-filled with water, a dish with soap, a nail brush and a couple of small towels. Under the table he placed a ewer of water. On the right he laid a number of tools, chiefly of the cutting sort. And on the middle space he arranged, brought from the safe, the casket, which he had spent an hour in cleansing, the scrap of ancient parchment. the photograph of the document to which it belonged, and the de Lara dagger, without its case.

Now all was prepared—and ever so much too early—for the great moment when he should divulge to his dear daughter the amazing truth of her wondrous good fortune. He sat down to await the sounds which would warn him that his guests were at hand

A minute later he sprang up. What a thing to have forgotten!

Before the small mirror in the office he diligently brushed his hair. . . .

R ONALD'S stay on board the yacht had been brief. Having delivered his message to the two persons to whom he had been instructed to deliver it, he had returned to the motor-boat. Naturally, the others, in their different stages of getting to bed, were, to say the least of it, intrigued, and Lady Ballantyre's announcement to the effect that they were sailing at once for Tobermory, because Mr. Maclean had discovered something that might prove to be of value in an old well, was calculated to heighten rather than to allay their curiosity.

"I have never heard of any old well,"

was the comment of Ailsa, who appeared very shortly on deck, evidently anxious about her father, "and I think Ronald might have waited to tell me more about it."

"Frightfully mysterious and thrilling!" was Winifred's summing up. She, however, remained in her room till the anchor was let go in Tobermory Bay, and then arrived on deck, looking as though she had enjoyed a full night's rest. Whereupon, "How wonderful you are!" said Steve, who had been yawning his head off. "I expect the old man has got what he would call a bee in his bonnet; but I don't mind if you don't."

Lady Ballantyre, seeing Luis join Ailsa, went to her cabin. She had not attempted to ask him for an explanation of his cavalier treatment and brutal words, and he had offered none. Together, in the saloon, they had listened to Ronald, and then Luis had gone with Ronald to the gangway and had not returned.

Flora Ballantyre had endured great unhappiness before now, but this was heartbreak. Luis distrusted her! How had he found her out? Why, of course, he had seen something-perhaps a contract note -on her writing-table, just as he was leaving "office." That would explain the music, his avoidance of her, his "How can I believe you?" But no explanation could render his distrust easier to bear; no sense of shame counteract the longing in her heart: no hatred of self make her love for him less. She had lost him—lost him at the moment when she had thought to win him by her sacrifice of those accursed jewels, which had been the real barrier between them. Now he would seek solace, distraction, with that young girl, and in the end, despite religion, would find his mate in her.

In that hour Flora Ballantyre knew desolation. "Oh, God, give me the jewels, and before another day is over his Church shall have them! Let me be poor for the rest of my days! Only let him come back to me. . . ."

A ND now the little procession was going up the hill to the house where the jewels lay, Ailsa and Ronald in front, Steve and Winifred next, Lady Ballantyre and Luis, silent, in the rear.

"Well, well," Ronald was saying, "your father will be telling you everything, and you must not be asking me any more questions, if you want me to be true to

your father. Only, you see, I had to be breaking it gently to you about the hall."

"The hall does not matter when my father is all right," she said, "and I thank you, Ronald, for being so thoughtful."

"It is nothing. . . . I suppose you had

a splendid time on the yacht—Ailsa."

'Yes, it was rather interesting. But I must, not be forgetting to tell you to congratulate Steve and Miss Charters. are engaged to be married."

Ronald drew a quick breath, but said

nothing.

"Did you not hear what I was saying

just now?" she asked presently.

"Oh, yes-but I was thinking." a while, softly: "And so you have-come home, Ailsa."

"Yes, Ronald, I have-come home."

They arrived at the gate and turned into the garden. The lovers followed.

Luis touched his companion's arm, bring-

ing her to a halt.

"Lady, I ask your forgiveness," he whispered. "I was not myself to-night. I have a trouble I cannot speak about not now, at any rate. But I want your pardon, and I want your promise that you will, whatever happens, take your share of the jewels—"
"Luis, I—"

"Hush, dear! You will do what I wish -this time. The jewels are my gift to you. And this is my good-bye, Lady. In the morning I start for Spain-"

"Luis! You don't mean that!"

"I have a feeling—a conviction—that after to-night I shall not see you againnever see your blue eyes any more." arms went round her. "Only this once, Lady—beloved!"

He freed her, then took her arm in a firm clasp, for she was shaking and dazed.

"Come," he said in a steadying voice; "come, and let us get it over."

ACLEAN was waiting in the porch. Having welcomed and directed them to the dining-room, he locked the door and followed. That he was greatly excited may be assumed from the extraordinary fact that he forgot to offer the carefully prepared refreshments.

"Shut the door, Ronald," he said, and took his stand at the head of the table. "Flora, be pleased to sit on my right hand, and you, Mr. Señor, next to Flora. Miss Charters, you will excuse my own daughter sitting on my left hand. Stephen will kindly sit between you and her. You, Ronald, go beside Mr. Señor."

He wiped his forehead, cleared his throat, and, in a higher key than usual, began his

speech.

"Now I know you are all thinking that this is a very queer business, at such a time of the night, but it was such a very important business that I could not postpone it till to-morrow. And you are wondering what all these things on the table mean. Well, no doubt, you have noticed what a devil of a mess the hall is in, and the great hole in it, which is the old well of the old sort of a castle that stood here long ago. So I will explain it to you in as few words as possible." He paused, ruffling his hair.

"Some people in Tobermory will be telling you that I have dug up the old well to get water for a sodda-water factory——"

"Oh, Daddy, surely you have all the soda you need!"

"Whisht, my dear! I am not saying that such people are liars. Oh, no, not at all! Maybe the water will make very good sodda, but we need not go into that now." He unrolled the scrap of parchment from the dagger and held it up. "You, Ailsa, and you, Stephen, and you, Ronald, too, have seen this thing before, and, like me, wondered what it meant." He held up the photograph. "This was given to me by my good friend, Mr. Señor, who was introduced to me by my good cousin, Lady Ballantyre, whom you observe sitting at this very table."

"For Heaven's sake, Hector!"

murmured.

"Yes, I sympathise with your impatience, Flora, and I will not be long now," he said, with a kindly glance. "Now this photograph, which is a portrait of a real old parchment, fitted my own wee bit exactly —see!—and then I discovered that in the days of the Spaniards—it is too long a story to be telling just now—a great treasure of jewels, in a casket of lead, was cast into the old well." He dropped them both. "And here"—holding it up—"is the casket of lead, which was found by my partner, Ronald, whom you see sitting at this very table, who dived under the black water and found it with his own fingers!"

"Bravo, Ronald!" murmured Luis, and

the ruddy young man grew ruddier.

"And now," proceeded Maclean, breathlessly, "whose is this casket? You might be thinking it was mine-but you would be wrong. For this house belongs to my daughter——"

"Daddy!"

"Whisht, my dear. And everything in it, and below it, and above it belongs to her! And so the casket is hers!" He paused to enjoy the "sensation," then went on to produce a greater one. "And this casket contains—unless Mr. Señor has made a devil of a mistake—fully a million pounds' worth of jewels. But "—he held up a hand—"I am not greedy; my daughter is not greedy. Indeed, I am sure that nobody here present is greedy. And so I assure you all that, whatever the casket contains, my daughter will present half of it to my cousin, Lady Ballantyre, and Mr. Señor—if he wants it—being fifty per cent for introducing the business."

"Hear, hear!" said Steve. "Mother, you're in luck." To Winifred he whispered, "I hope it's not going to turn out a sell."

"The next part of the programme," said Maclean, using one of the towels for his forehead, "is to see whether there is anything in the casket."

"Mr. Maclean," Winifred put in, "this is really the most thrilling hour of my life!"

"And I am delighted to hear you saying so, Miss Charters, and I am thinking that my daughter will be wanting to choose a nice jewel for you—if there are any. . . . Well, now, I have been examining the casket, and the old opening place is so bashed that I think I had best be cutting a new place in this bulge. Ronald, come round and hold it steady for me."

Ronald came round. "Make a hole first," he suggested, "and then drive a cut

along."

"A very good observation, Ronald!" Having made the hole, he inserted the corner of a chisel and, hammering cautiously, slit the half-decayed lead to a length of about six inches.

"Now wedge it open," said Ronald,

helpfully.

"You may go back to your seat, my lad," said Maclean shortly. "I can think of some things for myself!"

With a screwdriver he proceeded to widen the rift till he could intrude his

ungers.

"Oh, Daddy, what a horrid smell!" cried Ailsa, while Lady Ballantyre and Winifred produced handkerchiefs.

"You need not expect eau-de-Cologne with jewels hundreds of years old—if any," he returned, a trifle irritably, for the crisis

was near. He peered into the gaping wound in the lead. "Surely there is something here! Now watch!" he said, and inverted the casket over the basin containing water. He shook it.

Little masses of unsavoury-looking stuff and small objects plashed and plopped into the water. With the blade of the screwdriver he raked the interior, and again

shook the casket.

Everybody, even Luis, was standing up,

staring.

"Be seated, and have patience," Maclean commanded, laying down the empty shell. He stirred up the mess, then, taking the basin in both hands, he set the contents swirling, and skilfully, at the right moment, tipped the fluid into the other basin, the eby getting rid of a quantity of the disintegrated fabric. Recharging the basin from the ewer, he repeated the operation, and got rid of more. A third swirling left the solid little bodies almost free of fabric.

"Ronald, take this displeasing perfume .

to the office," he commanded.

He picked out a stone—a tablet near an inch square, its edges and corners bevelled—cleansed it with soap and nailbrush, dried it, and passed it to Luis.

"What is it, Mr. Señor?"

Luis examined it, and answered: "An emerald—I should say, a very splendid one. There is no doubt about it, Mr. Maclean; you have found the real treasure of the Spanish ship. I—I congratulate you!" He laid the gem before Lady Ballantyre.

Many stones, rubies, sapphires, a few diamonds, and others, more or less magnificent, were cleansed and passed round, and then Luis, who looked very tired, said:

"It is enough—is it not, Mr. Maclean, for to-night? I suggest that you put all

away in your safe."

"You are quite right, Mr. Señor." The old man appeared exhausted. "It is enough for to-night. Still, I must do one thing more."

Gathering the stones from the basin in handfuls, he restored them to the casket, and with small exertion pressed the cut edges together. Then he turned to Ailsa.

"My dear daughter," he said with emotion, "to you, in the first place, I present this casket of jewels, wishing—"

His eyes lifted in a stare of astonishment, his jaw dropped. The others followed the direction of his gaze and saw the door steadily opening. A tall man in black, without a vestige of white showing, his face like ivory, entered, and paused for an instant, gravely surveying the scene. Then deliberately he stepped up to Maclean.

"In the name of His Holiness," he said quietly, with a foreign accent, and a lisp in places, "I take possession of these jewels,

A sudden sound from the hall—and Father Macdonald stood in the doorway.

"That man," he cried, "is an impostor!

The Spaniard sprang, dashed him backwards, and was gone. They heard the door to the garden unlocked and flung open. . . . Luis was first to recover his wits. Some-



"A tall man in black, without a vestige of white showing, his face like ivory, entered, and paused for an instant, gravely surveying the scene."

the belongings of the Catholic Church."
And removing the casket from Maclean's unresisting hands, he turned and, without haste, moved towards the door.

M. Dracquier, too, had the theatrical or, rather, the dramatic, instinct and a sense of its value. No one stirred. Everybody seemed stupefied.

thing boiled up in his heart. The swine! His Lady should not be cheated of her jewels! Snatching the dagger from the table, he darted out. The Spaniard was almost across the lawn. . . . He was astride the parapet, the casket caught in his left arm, when Luis came up with him.

His right hand flew to his pocket. Luis

grasped the wrist and raised the dagger to strike.

And then—then it seemed to Luis that the man's face changed to that bloated brutal face of the man in the Toledo mountains, and out of the quiet night shuddered a whisper—"Murderer!"

His grip relaxed. The dagger fell on the para-

Someone had switched on the lights in the hall, and the dire scene was illuminated. Father Macdonald dropped on his knees by the stricken man, and from his lips a whisper of horror went up to Heaven. Next moment he was giving orders.

"Water—plenty—salt—cloths and—and starch—quick, for the love of God!



pet with a little tinkle. He crossed himself.

And, even as he made the Sign, the other whipped out a thing that gleamed—and a fine spray, intensely cold, struck Luis on the cheeks and in the eyes.

One shrill scream he gave, then staggered backward, gasping horribly, clutching at his face, into the arms of Steve, broke free from them and fell on the lawn, a man in torment. The still air reeked of ammonia. Fetch the doctor. Run! Tell him—strong ammonia—face and eyes."

"Come," cried Ailsa to Winifred, "help me to get the water and things. Ronald, race for the doctor, and after, if you are a man, you will follow that beast and kill him!" She ran to the house

"I will!" he answered.

"And you too, Steve!" Winifred called over her shoulder.

THE priest was drowning the poor eyes with brine, plastering the seared face with starch. Lady Ballantyre, kneeling on the other side of the sufferer, supported him. Luis moaned—and moaned.

"Luis," she said brokenly; "Luis darling." She took his hand. He seemed unaware. "Doesn't he—know?" she whispered.

"Dreadful shock—collapse," muttered the priest. "We must get him to the house."

The girls had prepared the couch in the dining-room, and the priest and Maclean carried him thither. As they did so, the sound of a motor came up from the Bay.

In the dining-room Father Macdonald

continued the treatment.

"Where am I now?" Luis asked suddenly. "I do not see anything.... Jesu—blind!"

Father Macdonald quickly replaced the dripping cloth. "It is only that the light is low," he said. "Be of good courage, my son. The doctor will help you."

"Stay with me, Father." Pain again

became paramount.

Maclean and the girls went to the parlour across the hall, expecting Lady Ballantyre to follow. She slipped out into the garden. . . . Blind! Had she taken the very eyes from him? Would the doctor never come?

He came at last. As he entered the house, once more the sound of a motor came up from the Bay—the white boat starting in pursuit of the grey one.

The doctor stayed a long time in the dining-room. When he came out he said:

"Father Macdonald and I are taking him down to the hospital. I confess that the thing is beyond my knowledge. We must get the best advice possible, and quickly. I am 'phoning to Oban, but——'

"Forgive my interrupting," Winifred interposed, "but last night I noticed in the paper that Sir James Yates, the great eye surgeon, is holidaying at Arisaig—"

"Ah, if you could get him!" said the doctor.

"I'll get him!" Winifred turned to Lady Ballantyre. "Give me a note to your captain, bidding him put the yacht at my disposal. Give me a letter to Sir James—"

"And by —," said Maclean, "I will

give you a blank cheque to him!"

"That is my affair, Hector dear," said Lady Ballantyre. "Yes, Winifred, I'll give you them at once. But how are you going to get on board at this hour?"

Ailsa spoke. "I will find a small boat

and put her on board in no time."

"You-you are all wonderful," sighed

Lady Ballantyre. "Hector, show me where I can write."

"The spare-room is all ready for you. You will find everything there—and if it is not there, you have only to ask."

While she was writing they took Luis away. He had not asked for her. That hurt. But now she wanted to be hurt. It seemed to her, poor Lady, that the more she was hurt, the better the hope for Luis's eyes. And, when Winifred and Ailsa had gone to the *Miranda*, she set out to hurt herself, as far as it lay in her power to do so.

She wrote to her son, telling him the truth about her speculations, the loss of his fortune and its restoration. She wrote a telegram to her stockbrokers. She calculated that the recent advance in "Flossies" would give her enough money to pay her debts. To Hector she handed both messages, the first to be delivered, the second to be dispatched, at the earliest opportunity.

Returning to her room, she prayed that Steve and Ronald might come back with the jewels, for Luis's sake. After that she lay on the bed, face downwards, and prayed

for Luis.

OUT on the still waters of the Sound, in the black hour before the dawn, Ronald stopped the motor and listened.

"Yes, we are getting the best of it! She is a rare wee boat," he said as the throbbing resumed. "Only there is the fog."

It lay in patches.

"Do you think they are making for Oban?" asked Steve.

"Dear knows. It might be Ireland—anywhere, if they have the petrol—and they have a lot, I know. Maybe a quiet place on the mainland, where they have a car waiting. But we can beat them—if the fog clears."

Later—"There is a ship sounding her

horn somewhere," said Steve.

"A trawler—two trawlers, I am thinking—bound for the banks beyond the Outer Isles. But they are far off yet. Yes, there are two of them, and pretty close to each other."

When half an hour had gone he stopped the motor again, but restarted it immediately. "Something has gone wrong," he said gleefully, "on the grey boat. Her speed is down. We will see her before long."

They did, but next moment she was lost.

"D—n the fog!"

Presently they were into it. Five minutes, and they were out again. Dimly they spied the quarry

"We have her now!" cried Ronald. "But we must look out for those trawlers."

"Glad you've got your rifle!"

"Yes; lucky it was handy in the store. And I will not be thinking twice to use it on their arms and legs. I learned something at the War. Be ready to take the tiller, Mr. Ballantyre."

They were drawing close, and Ronald was standing up, when the grey launch spurted.

"Ach! " exclaimed Ronald in disgust. "But it means only chasing a little longer. They cannot get away. . . . Ah, more fog yonder!"

A horn sounded hoarsely close at hand, on the right.

They saw the grey launch swerve to the left. And on the left a big shape loomed out of the fog.

The thing happened, almost before they knew. Yelled Ronald-"The other trawler -my grief, she's on to the grey boat!"

It was so. At the shouts from the trawler those on the grey launch seemed to lose their heads, and attempted to cross her bows. Too late. The sturdy stem caught the frail craft amidships, cracked and rolled her over, and the forefoot trod her under. M. Dracquier, his helper, and the Jewels of Santa Barbara went down in fifty fathoms.

In the morning Hector Maclean, a teatray in his hands, stood looking down on his cousin.

"Excuse me for coming into your room, Flora, but Ailsa is asleep, and I was not sure if you would be wanting Kate coming in. Steve is asleep, too-

"The jewels, Hector?"

"The jewels are at the bottom of the Sound, and a very good place for them! You will hear all about it afterwards. Forget about it now. I gave Steve your letter and took your wire to the post office. And —I called at the hospital. He has had a pretty bad night, poor fellow, but is as well as can be expected. And now you must be a good girl and take your tea."

He went over to the window and drew up the blind, then turned, saying, "Maybe you would rather not be having the light——" He gave a great start.

my poor Flora!"
"What is it, Hector? I suppose I do look awful."

"Oh, no, no, you do not look awful, my dear-oh, not at all." His expression was very piteous. "Oh, not at all—"

"Tell me at once! What is wrong with me? Give me over the hand-mirror! I

know there is one there."

"Maybe it is better to tell you," he faltered. "It is nothing-nothing very much." He came near. His voice fell to a whisper.

"It is only that your hair, Flora——"
"My hair!" Her hands went up.

"Has it turned white?"

"Oh, no, not at all! It is just—just that some of the gold has gone away. Maybe it will come back. And it is still very pretty —I assure you—very pretty, indeed——"

His voice broke. He dropped on his knees at the bedside, buried his face in the bedclothes, and sobbed like a small boy.

But Lady Ballantyre's eyes were dry. What did her beauty matter now?

T midday the Miranaa returned. The launch brought Sir James Yates ashore.

Lady Ballantyre did not go down to the hospital, but after the consultation Maclean brought the great surgeon to the house for lunch. Lady Ballantyre was waiting in the garden. Maclean introduced Sir James, a spare man with a harsh, dried-up face, and went indoors.

"Tell me," said Lady Ballantyre, almost

inaudibly.

"Please, sit down," he said, indicating the bench. "Considering what your friend has suffered, he is doing very well."

"But the-injury?"

"I do not think there will be any-indeed, I am hopeful that there will be no permanent disfigurement—of the face."

"But the eyes—the eyes?"

"Ah—the eyes. . . ."

"Sir James, he will see again-will he not?" Sir James looked around. The scene was very lovely, and beauty meant a good deal to him. This Lady Ballantyre was lovely, too. He closed his eyes for an instant. Not to be able to see . . . ever again! His mouth twitched—and firmed. One word came:

" No."

Quickly, briefly, he glanced at the woman on the bench, and moved away. He knew he could do nothing for her. No one could have done anything for Flora Ballantyre then.

BACKGROUND

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY F. MOORSOM

RS. KEMPWORTH felt that her enthusiasms always amused Rigston. He had known her as a girl before her marriage. He had been her staunch friend since her early widowhood. He had advised her as to the education of her only son David. And always it had been her vitality that had held him. She was as eagerly impetuous now as she had been in her girlhood. To-day, for instance, she was strung to concert pitch.

"And about so comparatively unimportant a thing as a luncheon party,"

Rigston smiled.

"Unimportant?" She considered the word and laughed at it. "On the contrary-of rare moment. A luncheon party that must count."

"In what way?"

"As background," Mrs. Kempworth said

quickly.

She glanced appraisingly about her morning-room as she spoke. It was a room of carefully-thought-out colour scheme. Madonna blues were rich against a background of cream. A bowl of scarlet flowers in the window gave the one admitted change of colour. There were only two pictureswater-colour sketches of the Porta Etrusco at Perugia.

"Just a small company," Mrs. Kempworth said aloud. "I thought of yourself, Mrs. Cronley Johnson, Agatha Fordington, Gerald Brown, Henry Carlin, David-and

a girl David's interested in."

Ah! The sting lies in that last."

"David's interests have always been mine. An only son-you know his value? Naturally-

"His friends must be inspected," Rigston

smiled. "Who is she?"

"Nobody we know. She lives out at

Willshaven. Her name's Mary Galt."

"I like that," Rigston said. "It's crisp, clear-cut. Mary for beauty of cadence, Galt for necessary but essentially unimportant label. Well?"

"I want this luncheon party to be her introduction to David's background."

Mrs. Kempworth was mentally reviewing her prospective guests. Mrs. Cronley Johnson was an artist who lived for nine months out of the twelve in Italy. Gerald Brown's pen was winning him recognition from the elect. Henry Carlin had travelled extensively in odd nooks and corners of the world. Agatha Fordington was a beautywith brains. Rigston was Rigston the ready, the smoother of awkward corners, the fashioner of level paths in social inter-

"It's a nice little group," Rigston nodded. "You're doing honour to David's friend."

"Exactly. Honour—I like your selection of the word. As for details——"

"They're all serene. You can do things about as perfectly as anyone I know, Sybil. You're an artist in household detail. This girl, this friend of David's—you like her?"

His pause was not unduly prolonged. He filled it with a quick, "Anyhow, she'll see David's background right enough."

"David has always been super-sensitive

to his surroundings."

"Inheritance," Rigston said. "You're like that."

She was telling herself that she had never studied detail more carefully. To David she had said simply, "I want you to bring Miss Galt to lunch on Tuesday. I've a few people coming. She'd like to meet

"I'm sure," David had answered. "Mary's interested in life. She'll enjoy listening."

"And talking?"

"Well, not much of that. She's a quiet little soul."

Mrs. Kempworth fought her thoughts; they were tempestuous and held mimicry of warfare. In an unguarded moment David had fallen from the heights she had trained him for. This immature slip of a girl lacked essential background. She was of commonplace extraction. She had no literary or artistic leanings. These and a hundred accompanying details had jumped to Mrs. Kempworth's senses when she saw her first. David had met her during a tramp in the country. He had sheltered

"I understand you, of course. You'll fight for David, but with fine-edged weapons. A subtle attack . . . impalpable as a shadow but as real."

Weapons . . . an attack . . . After Rigston had left her she considered the metaphors and approved them. She was



in their cottage in a thunderstorm and Mary had dried his coat for him. Afterwards Mrs. Kempworth had met David in Town, showing her the usual country cousin lions.

Rigston had been covertly watching Mrs. Kempworth during the silence. He broke it now.

fighting for David's happiness. He had always been sensitive to his surroundings. Atmosphere meant everything to him. Well then . . . he should see this girl for once against a background of finished and artistic detail. He should breathe the rarefied atmosphere in which Mary Galt would probably droop and wilt.

R IGSTON was the first luncheon guest to arrive; then presently David with Mary Galt. She was a slight girl with candid eyes. Candour was probably her strongest weapon. She was devoid of pretences. She made no effort, for instance, to cloak a certain naïve interest in her surroundings. Mrs. Kempworth wondered if the bronze

tints of her drawing-room appealed to the girl or left her cold. She saw her eyes linger for a moment on the only picture in the room, an etching of an Alassio footway.

Mrs. Kempworth performed introductions cheerfully, but with an eye on David. "Miss Galt, Mrs. Cronley Johnson." "Miss



"'Your handkerchief,' Mrs. Kempworth said. 'I thought I'd come myself.' 22



Galt, Miss Fordington." Certainly the girl was not pretentious. She hardly spoke beyond the necessities of affirmation or negation. She listened—Mrs. Kempworth gave a grudging acknowledgment to the intensity of her concentration. She saw Henry Carlin becoming voluble about his recent trip to Iceland, trapped for a moment

by Mary Galt's receptively opened ears. It was round the luncheon table that the girl showed an alien presence. The talk was a deftly woven web that enmeshed everyone save Mary Galt. She picked up no thread that was thrown to her. She was an ear, nothing else.

David? Mrs. Kempworth's glance went

to him from time to time. He was at the foot of the table with Mrs. Cronley Johnson and Agatha Fordington to right and left of him. Mrs. Cronley Johnson was in a voluble mood.

"We've never given art sufficient attention in domesticities," she suggested. "Let us have worth-while colour schemes in the kitchen. I suggest carved wood over the washing-sink. Or, if you insist on tiles, then have Morris designs."

"I'm a convert," Agatha Fordington admitted. "Also I hung a copy of 'La Notte' in the parlourmaid's bedroom. She gave notice. She said it affected her

nerves."

"Colour?" Henry Carlin's voice came into an instant's pause. "I believe colour's responsible for half our moods. Grey walls—depression. Cream walls—all's well with the world. Shadow and sunlight. . . . Now in Iceland I noticed——" He was launched. In a quick sequence of sentences he gave them vivid pictures of atmospheric effects in the land of the North.

Gerald Brown was not talkative. He gave an occasional interjection, as for instance when he said to Mary Galt, "If shading makes a mood, what colour was Trajan's robe the day Ignatius came before him?"

David filled the pause.

"Or what colour should Circe have worn when she remembered the herb moly?"

"Flame colour," Agatha Fordington said. Mrs. Kempworth was telling herself that if the chatter was idle merely it was born of a certain elemental kinship. They were of a clan—with this slip of a girl of David's friendship for the one alien. And David saw it. Mrs. Kempworth knew by his expression that he was weighing, considering. She saw his glance go to Mary Galt, a still figure etched against this new background. Probably, Mrs. Kempworth told herself, David hadn't realised his mistake before. It was a slip that needed high lights, accentuation. Once seen clearly, realisation would act as a cool douche on the friendship. Background was the thing that had always counted with David. It would count with Mary Galt too. In her way the little thing was no fool. She would probably see herself as David saw her now-a sparrow in a nest of skylarks.

R IGSTON stayed a little while after the others had left. He laughed at Mrs. Kempworth's unchecked sigh of relief.

"That's that," he nodded. "You've certainly given David food for thought. I never knew him more silent."

"He was not hurt?" she wondered. She had a moment's compunction. Sometimes youth took its lessons hardly.

"No, not that I fancy. But he saw."

Mrs. Kempworth's thoughts were tinged by the idea of David hurt. She had a quick desire to speak to him; to console. He was seeing Mary Galt home to Willshaven. Mrs. Kempworth imaged the short journey touched with a sense of awkwardness for both of them. They had seen—she was sure of it. Against David's familiar background they had become more clearly outlined, each to the other.

Something white lying on the floor caught her eye. It was Mary Galt's hand-kerchief. Well... here was a pretext for going out to Willshaven herself. Till this afternoon an inexplicable sense of shrinking had kept her away. It was not far. She and David could come back together—mother and son linked by strong cords of affinity. He had seen—she was sure of it. He had always responded to atmosphere. Thank Heaven, David had never found it easy to conceal his feelings.

It was a matter of a few impetuous moments only before she was out in the road, hailing a taxi. She would ride all the way to Willshaven and dismiss the man at the end of the lane where the Galts lived. She had heard David speak of it so often that the address was at her finger-ends. Her mental pictures of the place were filled in with crudities of colour. Chromos on the walls probably . . . shell pincushions . . . plush-framed family portraits simpering from the chimney-piece. . . .

She came to a halt before a thatched cottage. A flagged path led to the door—and either side the path afire? She laughed at the momentary delusion. Tall flowering "red-hot pokers" had tricked her eye for the moment. She pushed the gate open and walked to the door. It stood wide to the rush-matted kitchen. She saw whitewashed walls . . . a few rush-seated chairs . . . a wooden table. . . .

Something stayed Mrs. Kempworth's hand when she would have knocked. She heard David's voice reading aloud—she caught a few slow sentences about orchard-tending. The even, half-monotonous tones came from a room on the left. The sound drew her. She felt thrust by some inner compulsion into the rôle of eavesdropper. This door,

too, stood wide. Whitewashed walls again ... exquisitely clean ... rush-matted floor . . . rush chairs . . . for the only ornament

a bunch of mignonette in a glass jar.

Mary Galt was sewing. A strip of clean print lay across her knee. She stitched slowly. deliberately; the rise and fall of her hand was rhythmic. David's voice was as rhythmic as the rise and fall of Mary Galt's fingers. . . . There was a wood fire in the grate and the burning wood made occasional spurts of sound.

They had seen her. David was on his feet, amazed. Mary too, after she had

quietly folded her sewing together.

"Your handkerchief," Mrs. Kempworth said. "I thought I'd come myself." Her explanation over, she felt tongue-tied. Her usual store of chatter would fall flat, evaporate. Silence . . . stillness. Somehow here they seemed friendly, not enemies to avoid.

"I'll make you fresh tea," Mary said. She left David and his mother alone whilst she went to get it. David leant back in his chair, idly turning the leaves of his book. Mrs. Kempworth found herself actually hungry. She had been too engrossed at lunch-time; food had been a pretext only. Presently she found herself eating a hearty tea of home-made scones and jam. The glass jar of mignonette stood in the centre of the table, distilling fragrance. Such talk as there was seemed to match the place—leisurely anticipations of autumn garnering. Pears to be gathered . . . keeping apples to be stored in the loft. Mrs. Kempworth was able to visualise the life Mary Galt and her widowed father lived here. Apple and pear growing; orchards and their tending; close but friendly grips with Mother Nature. Pruning time . . . harvest . . . the cycle of the year moving to the rhythm of blossom and fruition. . . .

MRS. KEMPWORTH and David came away together presently. It was not till they were back in their own house that David spoke of things nearest their thoughts.

"I'm glad you came out to Willshaven.

It's unique in its way, isn't it?"

She was so long considering his adjective

that he spoke again.

"I owe you a lot, Mother. I've always been sensitive to surroundings. You've helped me there. I've lived with beautiful things . . . clever people." His pause was to visualise the circle of friends he had lived among. "You've given me a fine sense of background."

She bent forward and touched his hand. "I understand, David. For a little you were held by the sheer simplicity of the Galts and their home. It is beauty—in its way. Only you, of course, are tuned to a different key. To-day at lunch—it was your setting. But not Mary's?"

"No. Not Mary's. I saw that."

Mrs. Kempworth felt the thrill of victory. She had won. That last was avowal. "No, not Mary's. I saw that . . ." Well, she could afford to be generous now in her phrases.

"She's a nice little thing, David. Simple and unsophisticated and sincere."

David's assent was instant. "Sincerity, simplicity." Then, with a quick change of tone, "Have you any idea how you've helped me? That luncheon party was illumination. It was certainty."

"That's why I did it, David. There,

I've confessed."

"You planned it? You realised?"

"Yes," she nodded.

He was on his feet, bending above her. His arms came impulsively about her shoulders. "You brick of a mother! You understanding spirit! You knew that I'd see Mary's exquisite perfection more clearly than ever?"

Perfection . . . see it more clearly . . . Mrs. Kempworth was groping in mists. David's voice was still vehement.

"She's perfection—she and her background. I've found the one flawless specimen. And if you hadn't trained my eye I might have missed it."

She was silent. She hung poised over a gulf of indecision. She chose the best

when she said slowly:

"Good for you, David, if you've found perfection. You've got what some of us are still seeking."

D IGSTON came to see Mrs. Kempworth the next morning.

"Well?" he questioned. "It worked? David saw?"

"Clearly."

Rigston chuckled. "That's good, then. You've won."

"Not I-Mary Galt. She's beaten me with one of my own weapons."

" Which?"

"Background," Mrs. Kempworth said crisply.



PUTTING HER FINGER ON IT.

WIFE: After all these years, George, I have at last found out what it is I dislike about vou. It's vour face.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE OPPORTUNIST

By Richard W. Bond

"SPEAKING of dogs," said the hearty man with the double chin and the large area of waistcoat, "reminds me of a rather extraordinary experience I had years ago."

Silence reigned in the compartment. A cold silence. But the hearty man was unabashed.

He was that sort of man.

"It concerns," he continued cheerfully, "the only occasion in my life that I ever did a hole in one. I used to golf quite a lot in those days with a bosom pal of mine—a fellow-clerk by the name of Simpson. We were both quite moderate players, but we always enjoyed our games together because there wasn't a pin's point difference between us.

"Now at the time I'm speaking about I had a little Irish terrier—a wonderfully sagacious little beast—and we were in the habit of taking him with us whenever we played a round. And that dog-Micky was his name, by the way-was well worth taking round, for in his time he must have saved us a small fortune in golf-balls. No matter where a ball was driven the little rascal would nose it out and stand guard over it without disturbing it until we came up. I had taught it to do that,

you understand. Remarkably intelligent little fellow he was. Almost human.

"But I'm digressing. I was going to tell you of the occasion I holed out in one. Well, this was the way of it. It happened that Simpson and I both fell for the same girl. We got it badly too, and for a time it seemed as though our long-standing friendship was threatened. You see, Mary-that was the girl's name-showed no sign of preference for either of us, and the result was that we both took to hanging about her skirts like limpets in case the other should steal a march and see her alone."

The hearty man paused and sighed senti-

mentally. Nobody spoke.
"And then one day," he resumed, spreading his large hands upon his ample knees, "Simpson came to me with a proposition. Briefly, his suggestion was that we should play a round of eighteen holes, the loser of the game to stand down for three months and leave the field clear for the winner to make the running with Mary. Well, the idea appealed to my sporting instincts and I promptly agreed.

"We played the match that same evening.

I will not bore you by describing the match in detail. Suffice it to say that with so much hanging on the result we were both naturally below our normal form. First one took the lead and then the other; and Micky, who of course accompanied us, had more work to do than usual in locating lost balls. And somehow or other, fantastic as it may sound, that dog seemed to sense the importance of the game, for he showed far more excitement than usual.

"We were level at the sixteenth, and then halved the next, which left us still level, with the eighteenth to play. Simpson drove first, and to my dismay he hit by far the best drive of the evening up to that point. It soared

beautifully up the fairway and bounded sweetly on to Bobby Jones the green. couldn't have done it better. Teeing up my ball, I knew that unless a miracle happened I was beaten.

"Well, a miracle did happen. Swinging desperately, I drove a ball that was in no way inferior to Simpson's. Micky barked delightedly, and raced off to the green, Simpson and I following behind.

"Now comes the curious part of the story. Reaching the green, we found Simpson's ball within a few feet of the hole. But of my ball there was no sign. For a second I stood stock-still, with my And heart in my boots. then, as one in a dream, I became aware that Micky was behaving very strangely. He was standing over the hole yapping and pawing the ground excitedly. I looked at Simpson. Simpson looked at me. And then, without a word, we dashed across to the hole." The hearty man paused dramatically. "And there in the tin," he concluded triumphantly, "was my ball!"

Pausing again, he slapped his thigh and chuckled.

"Simpson took his defeat like the sportsman he was," went on the hearty man, "and left the field clear for me with Mary. The result was that I married her a few months later." He glanced humorously round the compartment. "And to this day, gentlemen," he concluded, with a ponderous wink, "I can't say with any degree of certainty whether I owe my wife to my golf or to Micky, my little Irish terrier!"

Polite murmurs rippled round the compartment. And then a meek voice spoke from the far corner.

"Excuse me, sir," said the voice, "but would

you be so good ash—as to do me a favour?" All eyes turned to the speaker. He was a

mild-looking man with a high collar and a watery eye, and he was regarding the hearty man with a look almost of reverence.

"Why-er-certainly," said the hearty man,

looking somewhat puzzled. "What is it?"
"I'm jus' goin' home," explained the meek man, leaning forward confidentially. "Should have been home-hic-hours ago. Would have been too, but I met an ol' pal. You know how it is. One quiet drink for ol' time's sake—hic then one or two more—hic—and so on. Now my wife, though in many ways an eshtimable woman, is very unshym-unsympathetic. Awk-



TRUTH WILL OUT.

Dog Fancier: The 'ole secret in 'andlin' a dog like this is to believe you're not afraid of 'im!

NERVOUS CUSTOMER: Quite, quite, but personally I couldn't be so deceitful!

> ward to convince, too. Dish-disbelieving, if you follow me. A good wife and-hic-a good mother, but-

"Yes." interrupted the hearty man testily; "but what has all this to do with me?"

A look of supplication came to the watery eyes

of the mild-looking man.

"Why, you see," he explained solemnly, "I thought perhaps-hic-you could think of something good I could tell the missus when I get home!"

요용없

TEACHER: What is the highest form of animal life?

LITTLE PETER (quickly): The giraffe!

LOU-LOU AND THE SANE HATTER. Bu Edward F. Spence.

F course Lou-Lou and I talked over our Long Vacations, and what each of us had done-she having most of the talk. Suddenly I noticed that her customary pendant was not on her round white throat—the throat which, unlike that of most women, does not redden or brown in the sun or wind, so that after a long

"Don't shout, my dear-don't hurt your soft, low voice. I'll tell you all about it, for vou're sure to find out. Yes, I'll take some toast." And then the dainty blue-eyed blonde told her tragedy.

"Three days before the Long I was walking down Seymour Street in a brown study."

"Why brown, my dear?"

"Don't interrupt, and do respect the silly

consecrated phrases. I was passing a hatshop of no interest, for it had big notice: 'All hats 10/6 only,' and, of course, people don't wear halfguinea hats."

The pretty creature looked so aristocratic and expensive that her phrase hardly sounded snobbish.

"But just as I was passing, I noticed, in the middle of window, a lovely green pendant hanging by a thin chain to the top of a black, carved wood frame. 'Hullo,' thought I, 'will a cheap hat shopman know the value of jade?'-for of course I do."

"You've spent enough of your husband's money on jade to . . .

She went on placidly: looked at $_{
m the}$ hats - not half bad really-for I thought I'd pave the way to a bargain by buying one. The shopman was

horrid-reminded me of Dennis Eadie in a play called 'My Lady's Dress'-a red fellow who affected a French accent which did not disguise his Cockney tongue: an impudent, oily, youngish, overdressed dog. We discussed the hat I had selected and he very deftly made a slight change or two; then I paid, gave him my address and . . ."

"Just as you reached the door you turned



" FORE!" THE OPTIMIST:

outdoor holiday she can appear in full décolletage without the sort of chest protector of discoloured skin which disfigures the rest of us.

"No," she said, noticing my glance, "I've given it as a wedding present to a niece. You needn't look surprised. I know I'm not a born giver, but the thing was a swindle!" "A swindle!" I exclaimed. "I

"The fiftyguinea jade pendant a swindle."

Things were dreadful. I thought of marking

up the hats to a guinea, as that might sell them

more easily. Then I had an inspiration-in a

dream-so I put the pendant into the window,

and every day since then, ladies, fashionable

Mayfair ladies like you, madame, come into the

Magasin hoping for a bargain: and, like you,

madame, think it diplomatic to begin by buying

a hat they don't want: and so I sell the hats-

and said, quite casually, 'What about that jade pendant—is it for sale?""

She raised her evebrows. "How clever you are, my dear-I believe you could guess riddles if you knew the answers. 'No, madame,' he answered, 'it is not for sale.'

"'Not for sale,' I said," continued Lou-Lou,

"'I suppose at a price.'

"'Everything is for sale at a price, madame —and everybody that I've met. But I don't want to sell. You smile. Solomon observed that "the buyer saith it is naught"-he should have said that the seller declares that he doth not want to sell.'



OPEN TO CONVICTION.

HE: The papers say that that play we saw last night was a great success. SHE: I thought we must have been enjoying it.

size and colour, and well carved like that, would be about £25 in a shop east of Tottenham Court Road and £35 west.

"'I suppose it's real jade.'

"He shrugged his shoulders. 'How do I know? I'm a hat-seller, not a jeweller. Compare it with the pendant now on your pretty neck."

"The impudent dog."

"I swallowed his impudence, made the comparison and then said, 'Very well. Twentyfive pounds!' The brute laughed and answered, 'I told you I did not want to sell. The pendant is my mascot. Before I put it in the window I sold no hats, or not enough to pay the rent. oh, they go like hot sausages-but they won't give fifty guineas for the pendant.'

" 'Fifty guineas!'

"'Yes, guineas to people like you with real Russian sables.'

"'Fifty fiddlesticks,' I said, and marched through the door, which he opened with a quaint grin on an ugly mouth that I should like to have slapped."

"And then I suppose you plagued poor William, and bullied poor William, and coaxed poor William until he gave you the fifty guineas! and you bought the pendant for fifty pounds and kept the odd shillings and . . .

Lou-Lou was silent up to then, for her teeth

—lovely little pearls—were stuck fast in a caramel; but she got them loose and burst out, "I suppose that's the way you good women would behave; but I'm a lady—and besides, he wouldn't take less than the guineas, and what's more he wouldn't discuss the matter till I'd bought another hat."

Her glance at a mirror caused me to say, "And you've got the second hat on, hiding your lovely

golden hair."

"Wonderful how they can do these things at the price!"

"Madame Rustle's things cost no more for

"Then she told me she went into the shop to look at the pendant. I said that it was an attrape l'œil, and she said she fancied it was jade, and she thought she'd better buy a hat, though no one wears half-guinea hats, and I said, 'Un œuf!pour!un bœuf'—which she didn't understand, for she knows no more French than a Foreign Minister. And the shopman, whom she called 'charming,' sang to her just the same song about a mascot, etc., that he had sung to me—and asked fifty guineas, and she wound up by saying, 'Of course I didn't believe a word of it, and I don't suppose



"Some children are just naturally bright."

"Yes! What did yours do now?"

labour and material: the difference in cost is long credit, bad debts, huge rents and rates, heavy lighting bills, advertisement . . ."

"Please stop, my dear—am I telling a story or listening to a lecture on economics? Whichever you please, my dear—but not both—at once. The day I came back from Scotland Mrs. Trotter-Wilson called, and after talking a lot she said, 'Funny, my dear, I saw a pendant just like the one on your neck in a cheap hat shop.'

"When? Where?' I asked.

"'Yesterday, in a half-guinea hat shop in Seymour Street.' Fancy that!"

"Of course you didn't fancy that!"

it's real jade.' Her last words startled me."
"But of course you didn't show that."

"I got rid of her as soon as I could, and rushed off to a friend who is quite an expert. 'What's that,' I asked, 'and what's it worth?' showing him the pendant; and after a careful examination he answered, 'Quite a clever imitation, and worth a couple of pounds or so.'

"'And what would a real piece like that cost?' And he replied, 'About £20 in a shop north of Oxford Street and £30 in a shop south.'"

"Oh, my poor dear innocent! And so you dashed off to Seymour Street—no, you went home first and put on your smartest hat from Madame Rustle."

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"Good for you, my dear—and when I got to Seymour Street there was the sosie of my pendant in the window. The rascal promptly said, 'Come to buy another hat, madame? The one you're wearing from Madame Rustle doesn't suit you—she buys most of her hats from me.' I wonder if that's true. 'Now this...'

"'I have not come to talk about hats,' I answered fiercely.

"'A social visit, how flattering!' he observed, and I glared—oh, if glares could only kill."

"If they could, you pretty women would kill half the men—and regret the destruction afterwards."

"The brute laughed, 'And madame was gogo enough to swallow all that tosh!'"

"My poor, dear Lou-Lou."

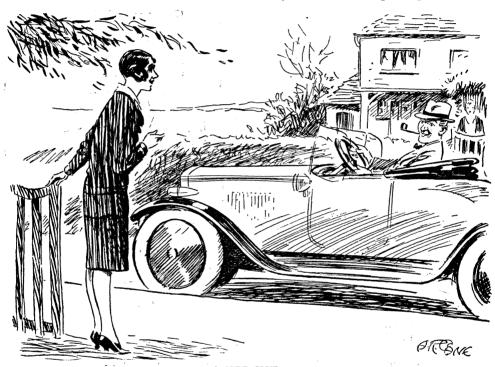
"I threatened to sue him and he replied, 'Portrait in all the papers of the pretty wife of an eminent K.C. who believed in fairy-tales, and a funny account of her jade fishing. But what an advert. for me!"

"My dear, William would never allow you to bring such an action—and of course he'd have to know the whole story—which he doesn't

now."

"And never will, and you won't tell your Edward."

"My dear, I never keep unimportant secrets



A SURE CLUE.

"How am I to know your aunt when I meet her at the station?"

"Well, she's travelling up with a friend of hers, so if you see two women, and one looks bored to death, the other will be my aunt."

"'The pendant was a swindle,' I said.

"'Julie,' he called out, 'take a note of what the lady says—there may be trouble.'

"I continued, 'You said it was jade, and

it isn't!'

"'I did not,' he answered; 'you said it was jade, and it is not for a shopkeeper to contradict customers, and a hatter would be mad, as mad as a hatter, to pretend to understand jewellery.'

"'You said it was worth £25 to £35!'

"'Oh, no,' he replied, 'I said that a piece of jade of that size, colour and carving would cost you that amount.'

"'And all that stuff about a mascot?'

from my husband; but he won't talk-he's a tomb if told anything in confidence."

"And as I was going out of the shop, I said, 'Of course, I shall warn all my friends against you.'

"The scoundrel beamed. 'I hope,' he replied, 'that you have many friends: they'll all come to see the Magasin and I shall sell hats, if not pendants, to them; and they'll rip out my labels, which are loosely tacked in, and say they bought the hats at Madame Rustle's.'"

Really, I wonder in what part of Seymour Street the shop is, for the second hat that Lou-Lou bought—I did not see the first—is

just "it."



FREE TO USERS OF WRIGHT COAL TAR S

The Proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap offer the following prizes for the FIRST 101 CORRECT SOLUTIONS OF THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE OPENED AFTER THE CLOSING DATE.

1st Prize Value £200 MORRIS COWLEY 4-seater Saloon

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CLUES

Across

Across

1. C.T. Soap is in this form. 6. Workshops.
12. Turn. 13. Used after washing with C.T.
Soap. 15. C.T. Soap will make you this.
18. This profession recommends C.T. Soap.
20. Coins. 21. Employ. 23. Noise made usually at night. 24. Popular breakfast food.
25. Window-screen. 27. Sometimes put in a boot. 28. River in Scotland. 30. Penetrate.
32. Go here for water. 33. C.T. Soap will do this to the complexion. 36. Wanted by those who are No. 14. 38. Bird. 39. Do this with No. 13. 42. Quantity of paper.
44. Better than a fiver. 47. Copy. 49. Masculine name. 52. Virginia is one of these. 53. Thick shrub. 55. Parts of fet.
56. Past tense of No. 38. 57. C.T. Soap adds this to the cheeks. 59. Go here for the waters. 60. Beat. 61. Sickness. 63. Great lady, almost peerless. 65. Decorative surface layer. 66. Bring up. 67. Married.
68. Sufferer for conscience.

14 28

Down

2. Nemesis. 3. C.T. Soap — all others.
4. Part of Camera. 5. Before. 6. Apply hot lotions to. 7. Debtors do. 8. Scarlet, Crimson, etc. 9. Gleam. 10. Guards. 11. Agree. 14. Drowsy. 16. Traditional Story. 17. Government. 19. Surface. 22. Users of C.T. Soap do this in the bath. 26. Often used with credit. 29. Fragment. 31. Drive back. 34. Freeze. 35. Dwel-

lings. 37. Lair. 40. Surrounds. 41. Rodent. 42. Determine. 43. Aid. 45. Where C.T. Soap is especially useful. 46. Least cooked. 48. Draw. 50. Threw. 51. Gather. 54. Sharpened. 56. Small weight. 58. Repair. 60. Liquid, not for washing. 62. Observe. 64. Period.

14

In submitting this solution I agree to all the conditions enumerated above.

ME AND ADDRESS SHOULD BE WRITTEN HERE IN	
PLAIN BLOCK LETTERS	

The Wlindsor Magazine.

No. 419.

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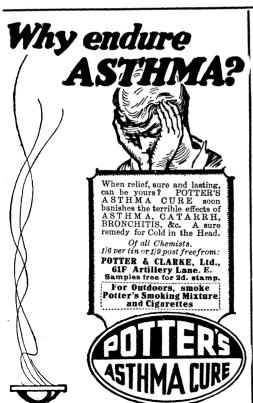
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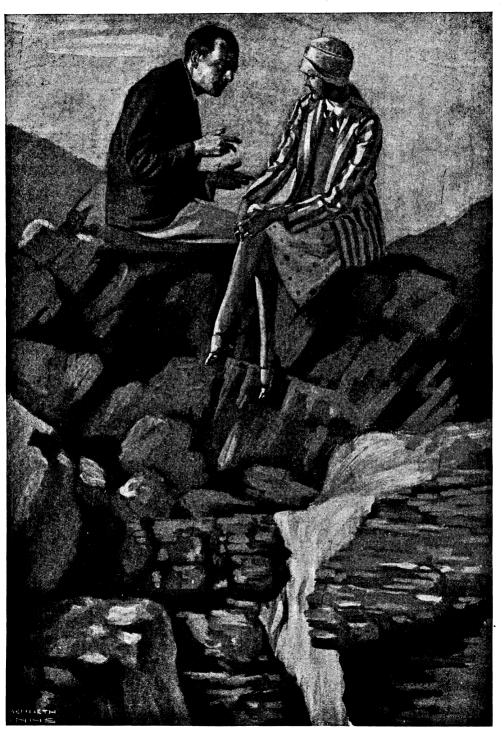
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OUR GREAT PUB-LIC SCHOOLS: HARROW,

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"Comparative anatomy at such a time and in such a place can have the sound of pure poetry." (See page 650.)



"She turned her eyes away from the skeleton and put her question once more in a different fashion to the back of her husband's head."

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

By E. TEMPLE THURSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY KENNETH INNS

EYMOUR NAISMITH, professor of anatomy and biology, the youngest and, with his somewhat cadaverous appearance, the most romantic looking of all the professors at St. Stephen's College, was quite aware of the opposites of sex. He knew, as it were, the anatomy and biology of these contrasted yet related forms of nature. But up to the time he was thirty-three experience had not taught him that between the physiological understanding of her sex and the psychological understanding

of a woman there is a gulf fixed, and though, being a good swimmer, he would probably have attempted to swim the Hellespont to save the sister of Phryxos, it never occurred to him to pay any particular attention to his wife.

To begin with, he had married her. Much beyond that, he did not know what greater attention could be paid to any woman. Undoubtedly he had been in love. No less undoubtedly he was still in love.

Looking up one morning two years before,

at a sudden noise in the theatre where he was giving his lecture on the metacarpal bones, he had seen for the first time amongst the students a round face, brightly coloured with health and full of laughter. The eyes were springing with mischief. A row of uncommonly even teeth were gleaming in the shadow between full lips. It did not disconcert him. Though certainly he did pause. A perceptible moment. But then, in the absorbed voice that made him so attractive—especially when it was roused to anger—he said:

"I must have silence at my lectures! What was that noise? Who made it?"

From the round face, the full lips and between that even row of teeth, came an admission, faintly smothered in laughter.

"What are you doing?"

"Cracking walnuts."

He was just thirty-one and young enough to smile. It was well known among the lady students that when, on rare occasions, Seymour Naismith did smile, it was worth seeing. The whole class perceptibly brightened.

"I should be much obliged," he said, "if you would relegate your passion for dessert to its proper place in the meal."

What woman or women would not have appreciated the academic sarcasm of that? They envied Margery Barrow for having thought of bringing walnuts to an anatomy lecture. It was seldom that Seymour Naismith addressed a remark to anyone outside the realms of anatomy or biology. To have been reproved for cracking walnuts was in the nature of an intimacy. At least five or six girls gathered round her when the lecture was over.

Now did she see how attractive he was! Apparently she had done so, for at the next lecture on the subject of the Radius and Ulna, just as he was saying, "The portion between the orbicular and the biceps tuberosity," he looked up at the tiers of faces above him and caught her eye.

It is quite possible for a man to catch a woman's eye when it is, so to speak, detached from the immediate affairs of life and in the mid-air of atmospheric susceptibility. In some such condition of the psychological ether, the eye of Seymour Naismith caught that of Margery Barrow, and you might say that from that moment they became engaged to be married.

Naismith himself knew practically nothing about it. All he realised at the time was that he had fumbled with his notes, repeated himself in a moment of unexplainable confusion, and then, as though nothing of any extraordinary importance had happened, had continued with his lecture and had not looked in that direction again.

How much Margery Barrow knew about it, it would be scarcely fair and certainly not reliable to say. The mind of a woman is made up by an invisible process. And when one says invisible, one means invisible to herself. She did not know that she was in love with Seymour Naismith. knew, in that instant when their eyes met, that anatomy was an extraordinarily interesting subject, and that attending lectures in a theatre with a lot of other girls could be even more exciting than the giant switchback at the Wembley exhibition. in fact somewhat similar, for just as Seymour Naismith's eye caught and held hers, she had all the sensation of rushing down an extreme height into the depths of an abyss and shooting up again with an impetus that was incalculable.

For the rest of the lecture the vehicle, as it might have been, carrying her emotions, seemed to run on the level, except on occasions when the lecturer appeared to be turning his head in her direction. Then it gathered speed down an incline, threatened all that same, not-unlikeable giddiness again and, as his head returned to his notes, regained the level once more.

That was all that Margery Barrow knew about it and yet, in terms of strict psychology, her mind was made up. As the psychologist might say, the motor of her subconscious was propelling her conscious mind in a definite direction. She did not quite know to what her mind was made up, but of one thing she was quite certain. Her eye should meet Seymour Naismith's again.

It did. The next time it was in the street, coming away from college after a chemistry lecture.

He had the reputation of knowing no one outside the precincts of the college. Not from any motives of discipline, not from any consciousness of superiority, but entirely because he was so keen upon his work, so immune from any susceptibility as to be utterly oblivious of any sex but his own.

Margery Barrow was quite aware of this. Not necessarily because these things are discussed by young women seriously adopting professional careers. With all one is told of the conflict for sex equality, such frivolous discussion would seem unlikely. If there were any solid foundation for

Margery Barrow's consciousness of this peculiarity in Seymour Naismith, it was in a tingling of the blood in her veins. It was in a sudden sense of excitement whenever she saw his figure in the distance. It was in a close observation of his attitude to any of the other girls in his class.

All these sensations, somewhat magnified because of the impending closeness of his presence when they should pass on the pavement and the fact that none of the other college girls were there to see, she felt that evening as she saw him approaching.

The glad eye is not only a vulgar expression, it is a vulgar habit of insensitive and insinuating young women. There are eyes displaying far more subtle emotions than that of mere gladness. A sensitive young woman before all things is possessed of pride. Gladness at an encounter such as this is the last confession she would make. Gladness—a mere vulgar gladness—would be the last sensation a man of any discrimination would like to see.

And all this, Margery Barrow, in a deep instinct, far too deep to offend her with its calculated information, knew quite well. Never could it be said on that occasion—not even by the most sympathetic and understanding of her girl friends—that she had given Seymour Naismith the glad eye. Far from it. Far from it.

At a certain distance, truly, her eye had met his. With a sharp and concentrated recognition, her eye had lifted his out of an abstraction which appeared to be focussed upon a middle distance in which horses and carts and motors and pedestrians were in a haze just definite enough to be avoidable.

Having done that, her eye, as it were, informed his that she was the girl who had cracked walnuts at his anatomy lecture.

Were this written as a stage direction in a play, any actress would regard it with contempt.

"How is it possible," she would exclaim, for me to convey by a glance of my eye, that I was eating walnuts at an anatomy lecture?"

As an actress she might be justified. But as a woman it would argue a delicate deficiency if she could not realise that these things are capable of being done.

Without any abnormal instinct for subtlety, Margery Barrow could do them. Thus, having, as it were, extricated his eye from that abstraction, she proceeded, in the ten to fifteen feet that were left her before they actually passed, to remind him of that

instant when, speaking of the portion between the orbicular and biceps tuberosity, he had caught her eye hovering in the psychological ether.

These two movements, as you might call them, for the progress of a love affair is peculiarly symphonic—these two movements having been executed, you might expect something in the nature of a flaming glance as they met. Not at all. There is little to choose between a flaming glance and a glad eye. If she did not know better, at least Margery Barrow had more pride than that.

At the instant of meeting, her eyes fell. Any man, pursuing these pages, will know the sensation that produces. From being lifted to the topmost story of a building from which it appeared he had a view of the world never conceivably his before, Seymour Naismith felt himself to be suddenly precipitated, in a sickening subsidence of the elevator that had exalted him to this empyrean panorama of life. She would not look at him. That was the impression he received. Far from giving him the glad eye, she would not even look at him.

With a slight cough, due entirely to nervousness, because he had never, so to speak, accosted a lady in the street before, he did, of his own accord and not because of any oracular invitation from her, stop and take off his hat.

He felt very ashamed of himself. For a man to force acquaintance with a girl as modest as this, whose eyes had actually dropped as they met, was a caddish thing to do. And yet, extraordinary as it may sound, Seymour Naismith in that moment felt both a cad and a gallant. Indeed, he experienced a confusion of sensations he had never known before. He felt both bold and timid. He felt extremely alive and yet as if an adverse word from her, any faint expression of offence or contempt, would strike him dead where he stood on the pavement.

In this state of mind, after a few fatuous remarks about her work for the day being over, and the difficulties of traffic in the streets, he inquired if she had had tea.

She had, as a matter of fact, just consumed what amounted to a large meal. She had brought three chocolate éclairs with her to college in a paper bag. And that was not all. Yet the thought of admitting this never occurred to her. She said:

" No.'

The purity of truth was there, transparent

in her eye. He might almost have supposed she was in that state of internal need known to a woman as just longing for a cup of tea.

The A.B.C. shop to which he took her seemed to him like the palace of a caliph's daughter. The tea urns might have been made of real silver. The marble-topped tables reminded him of pictures he had seen in his youth by Alma Tadema.

And as for Margery Barrow, she sat there facing him, listening as it were in a dream

to his eloquence upon the universal disintegration of matter. Between one piece of hot-buttered toast and another, he told her of the waste of matter by oxidation. As he broke up a lump of cake in his fingers and found his way to his mouth, he discoursed upon the reintegration of matter by the intussusception of new chemical reagents.

She had begun her biology course, but never had biology sounded like this before. The atmosphere of that A.B.C. shop quivered



"'I must have silence at my lectures! What was that noise? Who made it?'"

with the romance of it as the air over the tea urns quivered with the rising heat.

Within the space of two months from that

day, Seymour Naismith, the youngest professor at St. Stephen's College, was married to Margery Barrow, medical student in her



"From the round face, the full lips and between that even row of teeth, came an admission, faintly smothered in laughter."

second year. They went away to the Cumberland hills for their honeymoon. For three weeks, wandering on foot across the fells, following the courses of mountain streams and living like goats in the wilderness, Margery had never believed there could be such transportation from the humdrum realities of life.

It was true he talked of little else but his own branch of science. Finding the skeleton of a sheep high up in a crevice of rocks at a spot where Wastwater in the distance lay like a black talisman between the breasts of the hills, they went there morning after morning, when he expounded to her on comparative anatomy. But comparative anatomy when you are sitting on a ledge of rock above the world, with a mountain spring leaping between boulders at your feet, no vile form of man in sight-except his whom you find most desirable—with a little inn parlour preparing its rich meal for you down in the valley and a feather bedthough you may have hated feather beds all. your life till then—in readiness in the room upstairs—comparative anatomy at such a time and in such a place can have the sound. of pure poetry as limpid and full of colour as the metrical numbers of Swinburne at his best.

But after a week, even though it be in the midst of his honeymoon, the most enthusiastic of anatomists can become tired with the limitations of the skeleton of a sheep. Seymour Naismith began to realise he had not done any serious work for three weeks. Within three days from that realisation they were back at their little home on the borders of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and Mrs. Naismith, having forgotten her medical career as though it had never existed even in prospect, was preparing for the life of a happily married woman

How long this ecstatic happiness lasted it would not be easy to say. The condition of being in love is one that can more easily withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune than the irritations and pinpricks of domestic life.

As may have been observed in this account, Mrs. Seymour Naismith, neé Barrow, was a young lady of physical attractions and physical appetites with an impermanent ambition for a scientific career.

Once having married, she forgot all she knew about physics, chemistry, and physiology, while her knowledge of anatomy and biology was only sustained by her husband's absorbing and concentrated passion for his work.

In his study—not a large room—a skeleton of the human body, swinging its legs in response to any vibrating disturbance, served to remind her of the metacarpal bones, of the radius and ulna, and that portion between the orbicular and the biceps tuberosity.

Being in love, she sat there in the evening while he worked. She knitted. She made those garments which normally should give any man the delight of the delicate and pretty intimacies of married life. Being in love, she preferred sitting there to being alone in the drawing-room.

And very charming those evenings would have been to her if ever—if ever—Seymour Naismith had descended from the remoteness of his professorial chair and talked with her upon grounds of common, human understanding.

It may have taken a year, it may have taken longer, for Margery Naismith to realise that anatomy and biology do not possess in themselves for all time the delicate nuances of the language of love. The universal disintegration of matter loses its passionate significance. Waste by oxidation no longer has the faint, brushing thrill of a kiss upon the lips. While reintegration by the intussusception of new chemical reagents can become positively like a blow in the face.

At the end of a year she was certainly beginning to be aware of these things. Recovering her attraction for the pleasures of dancing in jolly, crowded rooms filled with jolly people, she found that Seymour had no time to spare for such frivolities. Realising after a while that a dinner cooked in some unseen and unknown place, of food which has the quality of surprise when it is set before you on the table, is a definite though indescribable joy, she found that Seymour, returning after a day's work at the college to an evening's work at home, was far too preoccupied to take her out to a restaurant.

By the time they had been married for two years it was becoming a tragedy. And Seymour Naismith, with his innocence of the psychology of women, was unaware of it. She sat one evening in his study reading a book while he wrote laboriously at his desk. It was one of the brilliant modern novels the morals in which were like the undigested contents of an ostrich's stomach. It appeared to make the ordinary functions of life of no account. What was more, it was

having an unsettling effect on the mind of Margery Naismith. She was feeling revolutionary. Looking up from the page she said:

"Do you think we're meant to express ourselves in this life, or do you think each individual is merely an articulating atom of the social body?

The last phrase she had taken piecemeal out of the book.

From the back of her husband's head, as though that were the only articulating feature he possessed, she heard the word:

"What?"

It was the skeleton with its numerous bones, oscillating on their wires to the vibrations of a passing motor, that gave her any definite reply to her question. The sightless eyes winked at her. The even rows of upper and lower incisors grinned out of the lipless skull. With the brilliant inconsequence of that modern novel it appeared to be saying:

"Why distress yourself—why consider anybody when this, this loveless heap of bones, is your only and ultimate destiny?"

She turned her eyes away from the skeleton and put her question once more in a different fashion to the back of her husband's head. And again from the back of that head, the sight of which had once thrilled her in the corridors of St. Stephen's College, emerged the one word:

" What?"

She did look at the skeleton then, straight into the cavities of its hollow eyes. For two years it had been her evening companion. When she wanted to dance, its fibula and tibia had oscillated to the vibrations in the When she had wanted a meal out at a restaurant, its upper and lower incisors had masticated the most delicate and unexpected of food.

Before her conscious mind had become aware of the determination of her subconscious, she had lifted the novel from her lap and hurled it across the room, straight at that erected heap of bones. The volume hit the figure square in the mid-riff. With a crash of sound, the metacarpal bones, the radius and ulna and that portion between the orbicular and biceps tuberosity, were shattered. The floor of the room had become like the excavations of a battlefield, and Margery Naismith was standing in the centre of the room with the flame of her offended sex leaping in her eyes.

"What in the name of heaven!" exclaimed her husband.

"There is no heaven!" she shouted back at him. "There's only a common ordinary earth, in which we're buried directly we get old, and our flesh rots away till there's nothing left but our miserable anatomy. I'm going out. I'm going out to enjoy myself. You needn't wait up. I don't know what time I shall be in!"

And she was gone.

O follow the miserable amusements of Margery Naismith that night as she partook of a cheap supper all alone in the Corner House would be to lose all one's belief in the fierce and noble virtues of independence.

When she arrived back at the remote fringe of the Hampstead Garden Suburb the house was in darkness. He had—he actually had gone to bed. He hadn't waited up! He hadn't cared! Probably he had spent the rest of the evening picking up those scattered bones and then, with no distress, with no misgiving, had gone alone to their bed and now was fast asleep.

She knocked again. A little less emphatically than at first. All the other houses were in darkness. The fringe of the Hampstead Garden Suburb seemed like the desolate edge of the world. She had never felt so alone in her life. A third time she knocked and listened. There was still no sound in reply.

He could sleep as heavily as that! After such a demonstration of her feelings as the shattering of that skeleton had so satisfactorily supplied, he could go to bed as though nothing had happened! While she had been disporting herself alone, amidst the vicious night life of London, he could go to sleep so deeply that even her persistent knocking could not awaken him. She shivered in the cold night air. She trembled as she stood there alone on the fringe of the Hampstead Garden Suburb.

But if she were afraid of the consequences of her desperate action, it was nothing to the relief experienced by Seymour Naismith the moment her first knock had roused the echoes in that suburban solitude. as she suspected, spent the rest of the evening reassembling the bones of his skeleton, a fine specimen of the female species of which, as an anatomist, he had been not unjustly proud. But an extra-ordinary thing had happened to him. He found he was no longer thinking of the anatomical structure of that female, whoever she might have been, but of the woman herself whose flesh had clothed those bones that he was collecting in his fingers.

Women, he realised it, were sentient, sensitive creatures. They were not merely a variant of the genus male. There was something in their nature which, in essence, was peculiar to their psychology. wanted to be loved.

It shocked him. More than that, it frightened him. For if it was so passionate a need that it could induce them to employ such violent measures to attract attention, as his wife had employed that night, then the work of every man's life-for which it seemed to him man solely existed—was in constant jeopardy. It was threatened, not only because she could destroy it with the hurling of a missile, but because, having hurled it with disastrous effect (he was sitting on the floor at the moment endeavouring to assemble the metacarpal bones), she could then leave him in a state of chaotic solitude in which he felt like a rudderless ship at sea.

It was a problem. He had to face it. For how could he go to bed that night, knowing her to be wandering alone in the vicious streets of London? And if he did go to bed, how could he hope to sleep when the thought that perhaps she was amusing herself with some other man would aggravate his mind then as already it was be-

ginning to aggravate it now?

The picture it was presenting to him was intolerable. He could not bear it. Three times he had gone out into the little front garden and, hiding behind the indigenous privet hedge, had gazed down the road over the domiciled wastes of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. But she was nowhere to be seen. She had indeed departed on that quest for amusement. By twelve o'clock his state of mind was frantic. He was beginning to believe she would never return. She had left him. Not only would he have to spend his sleepless nights alone, but he would never be able to bask in the faintly interrupting peace of her company again.

He would know better in future. were sentient and sensitive creatures. their desire to be loved they needed the attentions of a lover, as a cat needed the occasional brushing of its coat, as all domesticated animals needed the attention of those to whom they belonged. But would there be any future?

At the sound of her first knock his heart had hung, motionlessly suspended like an arrested pendulum, in the cavity of his breast. His first impulse of relief was to rush to the door and admit her, not merely to the house,

but into his arms.

With a superhuman effort, gripping the tibia of the female skeleton in his hand, he resisted the inclination. Standing there in the darkness—for at the first sound of footsteps along the suburban road, he had put

out the lights—he waited.

The knock was repeated. Already his heart was at the door, but a sudden human cunning had taken its place in his mind. With swift but wary footsteps he climbed the stairs to their bedroom and took off his clothes. The knock, growing timid now, but still insistent, was repeated for the third time. He cared, but he did not swerve from his purpose. Putting on his pyjamas, donning his dressing-gown and disarranging the bed, he went downstairs.

He was suppressing a yawn as he opened the front door and let her in.

"You might have taken the key," he said. She whispered that she had forgotten. "Enjoy yourself?" he inquired as she

followed him upstairs.

"Yes—awfully."

He wandered about the room while she prepared for bed. Tentatively, timidly, she was just about to slip down beneath the bedclothes when she realised something.

The sheets were quite cold.

She laughed softly, almost inaudibly, with a subdued note of triumph.

ON A SHELL.

THE man that dwelleth on the shore Happier is than I, Who have this single shell to chant A rune of sea and sky;

Yet when I hold it to mine ear More happy I than he, For while he hears one breaker roar I hear Infinity.

WHITE EYELIDS

By JONATHAN KELLY

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

THE Bright Half Moon is one of Le Havre's lesser taverns near Notre-Dame. Here a rich man, beggarman or thief may flip a finger to a "ten-day dickie" garçon and order a meal with good wine for ten francs, leaving either a franc, a greasy chair, or no cutlery behind respectively as a mark of service approval.

The tavern is very cosmopolitan in its diners. I have seen captains of British and American ships kicking Arab carpet-sellers away from their tables for the crime of subtle abstraction whilst the skippers were occupied in heated debate over the War Debt. Very few Frenchmen attend the Bright Half Moon, but men of many other nationalities frequent it greatly. Britishers and Americans, Greeks, Italians and Japanese predominate.

It was here where I met "the Winker." He was sitting opposite me in an alcove busily winking the right eye in time to the chewing of his steak. As the rate of his chewing was forty to the minute, the synchronisation of eye and jaw reminded one of link motion on the Flying Scotsman, and having a vulgar sense of humour I laughed outright.

The effect was instantaneous. stopped dead in the midst of an exercise from Fletcher, the link motion snapped and I was rewarded with a glare for my vulgar burst of hilarity. Grasping a fork, the diner rose from his seat and made his way to my table.

Holding my ground valiantly, for the simple reason that he was at the open end of the alcove's blind alley, he had me by the lapel of my jacket before my instinct was sufficiently roused to leap over the table and away. However, there was no cause for alarm.

"Sir," he said, with only a slight trace of asperity, but much eagerness, it seemed, "I would be glad if you would dine with me. As you are a reporter, the proprietor

tells me, I think I can make a dinner very interesting for you."

I bowed my thanks and acquiescence and we made our way to his table, my instinct roused, yet with the secret feeling that I was humouring a certain amount of insanity.

"Now, my friend," said my host when we were seated, "to come to the point at once, you choose to regard my affliction as an excuse for guffawdom—" But——" I protested.

"Enough, friend!" overrode my host, still winking. "Being broadminded, I bear no malice, but suggest as a punishment you shall listen to a tale I have to tell—a tale concerning the contraction of the habit. I have some loose time to spend before a friend meets me here, so with your permission I will begin, but before I do so I must ask you a question. What is my age?"

My eyes wandered over his lined but handsome face with its grey-edged thatch of hair and the shaggy eyebrows overhanging eyes which I suspected to be light blue.

"At least you are middle-aged, I should say, somewhere between forty-five and fifty,

'' I judged.

"Wrong," replied my host. "Miles out of it-I was twenty-eight last week. Such are the marks of adversity, ill-health and close confinement—a prisoner in Upper Morocco."

"I would like to hear your story," I said.

"Please begin."

Then my winking friend began his tale, punctuated at intervals with a perfect series of twitching winks.

For some years I was chief wireless operator at the Tali Telegraphie Sans Fils station, on the border between El Rif and Morocco. Nice job, spoke good French, learnt a little Rif, and had saved enough to go home and bring a wife out, but the mountain men vetoed that.

One night, with not a cloud to mar the starred sky, my assistant and I were sitting outside the station listening to the slight hum of the air against the lofty aerial, harmonising with night calls of birds and other desert sounds. I had just aroused myself, out of this lethargic state and retired into the station to answer a call You see, we had an extenfrom the Cape. sion leading outside from the set, and we frequently put on the headphones for a short spell of listening in.

I had just started up the motor for making a reply when suddenly there was a rush of feet behind me and all went dark. I woke up a day later, gagged, bound and sore, with a dim light around me. I was in a cell-chucked in upon the hard floor like so much coal in a sack, hurt as I was. thought I could hear the generator going still, but when I realised that I knew of no stone cellary place near the station, I knew it was the effect of the stunning blow upon

my grey matter.

For about half the day I got nothing to eat, and, bound as I was, my only occupation was in watching beetles coming out of the cracks as the sun-patch from the window enlarged, and warmed their domiciles as it passed them. Some time near noon, however, there came a sliding of bars and bolts and holding-beams from the door, mingled with a few Riffian curses, then a lengthy piece of mahogany Riff Ruffian appeared, holding a steaming dish.

Whether the meal was of the stewed land-crabs which abound on the sandy river-banks, or of boiled bats, I don't know, but I shifted most of it when my butler removed the gag and unbound one hand.

"Now, George," I said as I endeavoured to wipe my mouth with the gag, "perhaps I can have some information on this; please omit scholium, appendices and preface."

Most of the Riffs speak a little French only, but this fellow knew English very well because he repeated "scholium, appendices and preface" to himself and then said, to my great surprise, "Information, ver good; scholium, appendices, preface, no gud,—listen!"

Right then he sat down on his hams and

told me of my kidnapping.

It seemed that the Riffs in their surprise sweep across the border had chosen the gap in the hills near Tali as their overflow pipe, and my station and I were caught in the wash. Being the first signs of white civilisation, the van had dished my assistant and myself and left us to the rearguard to look after. My jailer could give me no news of my assistant, and I concluded that he must have managed to escape in the darkness at the first rush of feet when the Riffs surprised me.

My jailer withdrew his abominable self as soon as he had answered my questions, but I was left alone barely ten minutes before he entered again escorting another tall Riff attired in a little cleaner gear than the butler-jailer and with more trappings. such as instead of the one reeking goatskin pouch the latter carried, the visitor had The Hill Riffs seldom cure the goatskins properly before they make them into shot-bags and pouches, and their proximity is somewhat uncomfortable to delicate nostrils.

The visitor had other appealing signs of rank about him, such as that he spat lustily upon my butler's feet at odd intervals, the recipient of such salutations wiping each foot on the back of the other leg, like a schoolboy after trudging through dusty

"Dis Abdel Hureb," said the jailer, introducing the visitor. "Spiks no Ingleese;

you spik me, I spik him.

"Well, ask him what he's going to do with me, of course. He's the Riff boss. isn't he?" I said.

There followed a line of conversation for about three minutes, punctuated often by explosive spittings from Abdel Hureb, and followed by spasmodic leg-wipings upon the jailer's part. At length a point of order arose. The jailer spoke again in his hashed English.

Abdel Hureb spik you Telegraphie Sans Fils man, go wiss him, mak plentee speak other country, say Frenchman, Spanish very

cruel to leel Riff."

I didn't quite get this, so another halfhour was spent in hunting the camp for a better interpreter. A good French-speaking Riff was found, and to cut out the dialogue we had I'll come to the Riff desideratum.

Through the measured success of Allied propaganda by wireless during the Great War, Abdel Hureb had decided he would include a little in his tactics against his enemies.

I was required to work the set on 2,000 metres and distribute lying news of Abdel's successes to the world, together with false accounts of cruelties practised upon the Riffs by their oppressors. Parts for a high-power telephony set were being negotiated for and the good words were to be broadcast over the world to awaken sympathy by this branch also.

I understood the shame that would be mine if I consented, and knowing the Riffian squabble sufficiently to be absolutely The result of my refusal followed rapidly. For only another morning I watched the beetles roused from their domiciles in the cracks as the sun-rays traversed the stone floor. When the patch of light had touched the lower part of the opposite wall, my



"I noticed a dim light held near my face."

certain that they could never win, I resolved that the worst would come sooner or later, either as servant of Abdel or traitor to my employers, and I flatly refused to work the set. Abdel turned, and, motioning to jailer and interpreter, abruptly left my cell.

jailer re-entered my cell, this time with another visitor.

This gentleman surveyed me closely from the doorway, then approached me near enough to administer a heel-tap to my ankle. I howled and he hit me on the cheek-bone with a small whip he carried. My friend the butler watched these salutes in high delight, and also approached slyly to give me a severe cuff on the ear.

"Lich man," said the jailer, when he had my attention in consequence of his act. "Veree lich, buy you for servant tak you

long time-two day-big town."

My journey with the "lich man" was indeed a long one. As his excessively highpriced slave—Abdel had demanded forty francs for me-I saved wear and tear of mules and conserved baggage space by walking all of the two hundred miles to Sabri, on the coast, where the merchant lived. When I say two hundred miles I mean that many in actual distance, but five thousand in effect, because the roads were mere mountain paths and valley trails, sown thickly with ankle-twisting stones and footstubbing boulders when darkness fell. marched day and night, but chiefly at night, in consequence of marauding Moor bandits, who would appropriate the merchant's brass pots, rugs and other wares only too eagerly.

We arrived at Tangier and I was unbound and flung into a cell as black as a blocked tunnel and left there. About a minute later I was startled to hear a voice say:

"Etes vous Français or are you English?" English, I am!" I shouted back.

"Well, whatever welcome we can offer you, sir," replied the voice, "is freely given. Where have you come from?"

"I've walked all the way from Tali," I answered, "with a dirty caravan of rug merchants, and the one who bought me has

shied me in here for the night."

"You're quite wrong about your probable length of sojourn," said the voice. "Not to be in the least pessimistic, I know you're in for life. Marcel, pass the glow-bottle whilst we have a look at the gentleman's face. We may know him—what, Marcel, d'you mean to tell me you're asleep on such an auspicious occasion? Shame on you! Oh, that's better; wake up, old man, somebody here to see us; bring the glow-bottle."

There was the whisper and the plop of bare feet across stone paving, and then I noticed a dim light held near my face.

"H'm," said the more talkative of my fellow-prisoners. "Can't see much with this. We'll have to put some more slime in to-morrow, Marcel laddie—can't let our illuminating apparatus fade out like this."

"Now, sir, you have done a large amount of shanking to-day," said the man of words to me, "so I must caution you to lie down and sleep as much as you can, because some friends of ours will visit us and make you sit up before daylight."

His words were true. After falling asleep, it seemed only for ten minutes but was really seven hours, I was awakened by such a simple expedient as having a dirty Moor kick me in the ribs. I awoke angrily and by the subdued light of the dawn hit out sharply. I had the pleasure of walloping my persecutor a beauty on the shin-bone nose he wore. However, he had five assistants, and they overpowered me en masse before I could get another smack at him.

The gang of mephitic scoundrels piled on me and beat me into submission—an easy task, seeing that they used heavy sticks indiscriminately about head and shoulders. They bound me tightly, and from my bonds I witnessed what happened to my companions.

My silent fellow-prisoner, who had not uttered one word since my appearance, was dragged from his grass pile first, and with surprise I made him out to be a mahogany

rascal also and almost naked.

The Moor I had struck jolted his head back and attached a clamping thing to his back hair which caused the captive to wince slightly. The Moor then held him by this clamp and another commenced to rub his body over with a wad, causing the dark skin to glisten moistly. He was then dragged to a wall which faced a grating let into a wall opposite as a window and his legs bound together at a small stumpy stake. The jailers then locked a short chain to the clamp on the captive's back hair, and he was left sitting bolt-upright to the wall so that his hands were quite free yet could not reach to his leg bonds. Some large, bulky, but light sacks were flung at him, covering his leg bonds, and he immediately commenced upon some work.

Anyone looking from the window would now have seen an ordinary-looking Moor industriously plucking and sorting coloured yarns—silent and looking perhaps uncomfortable, yet none could observe from that distance that the man was so bound that any more than a little body movement

meant a splitting headache.

The Moors now collared my other companion, and he was also coloured. He mystified me completely when he displayed an unmistakable wink and grin of white teeth in my direction.

The jailers put him through the same

procedure as the other man, but when they had clamped his hair they forced open his jaw, grasped his tongue, and appeared to clip something to it. Then they wiped him over with the wad, and as they turned him I noticed that part of his back was lighter than his front, and after passing the wad over it the colour of his body became uniform. He was a white man, stained to represent a Moor.

My turn came as soon as this man was clamped and staked, and I let out a roar as they grasped me, and fought desperately but in vain. My mouth was wedged open and, with my head held back by the hair clamped, my tongue was grasped, and something nipping it immovably to the inside of my cheeks was clipped upon it. The gag was a small, almost outwardly unnoticeable instrument, yet I knew from my own and my companions' aphasia that we were effectively transformed into temporary dummies.

I was next stripped and stained all over with the colouring until of the same hue as my captors. I was then staked, and the fact hidden with sacking to inquiring eyes

from the window grating.

The work consisted of plucking handfuls of coarse multicoloured yarns from the sacks and sorting them into heaps of their respective colours. One of the jailers forced me to take a handful of the yarns and carry on likewise, and at the warning nod from my companions I was soon busily engaged.

Seeing us nicely settled, the jailers, after spitting carefully at us with deliberate aim, retired and left us to ourselves. I promptly dashed my heaps of yarns to the far side of the cell and made some gibbering noises in a vain attempt to gush over my bravado.

I glanced at my friends and saw that they had witnessed my act and were shaking their heads solemnly. I knew the reason for this when the first meal-time came. The Moor jailer regarded my friends' heaps of yarns closely when he entered, and ladled them a quantity of very thin stew into the dirty tins they presented. They received a quantity in proportion to the piles sorted, and ate it uncomfortably with their gaze still fixed.

When the stew ladler approached me, he gave me a tin dish, and squinting at my side I found several piles of yarn there, to my amazement. I received a little stew in token of this, and on catching a broad Cockney wink from my sidesman I understood how the piles had come there.

When I had satisfied the mere outer edge of my gnawing appetite with the slender portion I had received, I mentally resolved to have piles of yarn approximating to the Alps sorted before next meal-time.

We had barely finished our meal and resumed work before there came a commotion from the grating opposite us, and to my surprise I heard a feminine voice speaking English with an American accent.

"Gee!" said the voice, which as I stared I remarked came from a young girl gazing through the aperture. "C'mon, Earle, there's another guy here now; he's working like six, twice as fast as the other ginks."

Earle was evidently her companion, and now he also gazed through at us and passed

a few remarks.

I glanced at my friends and was greeted with another Cockney wink.

"Well, say!" remarked the male American. "He's a fat guy too; wonder if he'll go thin like the other birds; bet a coupla bucks he will, Peg."

I strove to express my appreciation of the compliment, but the little gag clipped to my tongue frustrated all my efforts and I could only give vent to a guttural gurgle.

"Gosh, Earle," said the girl named Peg, "he speaks the very same lingo as the other birds; that French guy says it isn't

Moor."

"Don't love his looks," commented Earle. "Got the sort of fat nose and gash mouth the delicatessen Fritzy has way back in Philly."

"Aw, sling 'em a coupla bucks," pleaded Peg, inserting a stick of chewing-gum into her pearly-toothed mouth and chewing lustily. "That littlest one has such a cute smile."

Earle thereupon stooped, and I noticed he had extracted two notes from his waistcoat pocket and was weighting them for a cast by wrapping them round a pebble.

The notes fell near the Cockney winker, and he stiffly picked them up and placed

them behind him.

The girl now placed another piece of gum in her mouth and offered her companion a stick. As he took it, the Cockney winker let out a series of loud guttural gurgles, held up his open hands, and pointed to his mouth.

"Gee, Earle," said Peg at this sign of begging, "the big guy wants a bit of gum again. Here y'are, guy—catch!"

She flung a piece to my friend, who caught it neatly, painfully attempted a smile,—

and stowed it away in his ragged body-

cloth securely.

"The French guy said to-day that he thought they were all dummies, Earle," we heard the girl Peg mention as they went away, and as I squinted sideways at the "big guy" he was again attempting a wan grin.

Soon after the Americans had gone we had another visitor, and when I saw his dress and appearance I surmised he was the "French guy" friend of our late visitors.

He appeared somewhat puzzled and puffed his pipe in silence as he watched us with a slight frown. His face became suddenly changed in expression and he leant closer to the grating.

"M'sieurs!" he barked.

My eyes were already raised, but at this Marcel, the ultra-silent one, jerked his up slightly, wincing. The "French guy" then turned and walked away.

. Twilight came, and with it our jailer with another meal. This time my sorting efforts were deemed worthy of ten times as much stew as before, together with a vessel of water.

The meal finished, we gave our dishes up, after scraping them, and sat there stolidly like the poor dummies we were.

Darkness fell wholly, and with it came our

persecutors en masse as before.

They grasped us in turn in the darkness and unlashed our legs and removed the gags. When mine was removed I shouted "Help!" and "M'aidez" alternately for a minute before one maroon-hued captor knocked me flat with his stick. The devils then went out and barred the door securely.

"Doesn't do you the slightest bit of good," remarked a voice, and I recognised it as that of my "Cockney winker." "I tried it myself when I first came here, but chucked it when I heard that Yank girl say she guessed it was worth the ten-mile drive out here to see 'these guys'—we're absolutely alone here in the desert. This part of Sabri is separated from the sea by that distance. Poor Jules here also howled a bit one night and the foul curs made him dumb for life—extracted his tongue."

Then I understood why Jules was silent always and why they had not bothered to

insert a gag in his mouth.

"My name is Herbert Polsing, late of the British Merchant Service. My ship was captured off Spartel by a mutiny of Moors we were transhipping to Koalack for the nut-crop. They took us into Tangier and tried to make me work my ship and crew for Abdel Hureb."

"They tried to get me to work the Tali Wireless Station for their propaganda," I said.

"Abdel Hureb is out for big things," resumed Captain Polsing. "The Froggies are going to have their work cut out. However, their squabble does not immediately concern us; we're in abject slavery, my friend;—Marcel!" he shouted abruptly.

I felt Marcel press near us to acknowledge

his presence.

"Get the effulgence bottle, old man," said Captain Polsing, and I felt Marcel withdraw, to return in a few seconds with

a dimly-glowing object.

"The glow-bottle," said Polsing. "We found some earth in the left-hand corner which glowed phosphorescently when it contracted wet and became uliginous,—observe our lamp, therefore,—constructed from a little bottle once containing cigarettes which our friend the 'French guy' threw to us. After they had performed that operation upon poor Jules here, I found him in the nick of time, struggling to smash the bottle and cut his throat on the edges."

"God!" I exclaimed. "You poor fellow,

Jules."

·I again felt Jules come near me and press closely as if in thanks for my sympathy.

"I hate to talk about such a thing, but Jules, I know, will excuse me," said Polsing. "He knows as I know that we must not understate the vileness of the people whose captives we are."

"That Frenchman seemed puzzled," I said. "As he looked in and shouted, I

thought he had a clue."

"That's the only one he has, then," said Polsing, "because he comes and says that very often, and I've been here six months."

"And Jules," I said, "how long has he?"
"A year and a half," answered Polsing.
"He's a French airman, brought down when flying from Algiers. He told me he was doing a last-overland flight to Draya—and then was going home to be married. However"—he turned to Jules—"you may be better off in here, old son."

Jules gave vent to a prolonged guttural

sound at this.

"Hush, Polsing," I said. "That doesn't sound nice."

"That's all right, old man," said the sea captain. "He's laughing."

"How do you know?" said I.

"Oh, one day that Yank girl was here

with two other girls, and she said Jules reminded her of a certain story, and she recounted it out loud. Jules made that gurgling sound until I thought it was his death-rattle, so of course I realised he was laughing."

Some days and nights passed and we were often visited by the Americans, from whom Polsing collected more gum, and sometimes the Frenchman called. One day he threw in a sheet of newspaper wrapped round a stone. This was ignored by our jailers, though they appropriated the dollar bills and money pieces thrown in by the Americans and many other sightseers and which we could not reach in our bonds to hide.

One night it commenced to rain, and Polsing, who was reading the newspaper sheet by the weak rays of his "effulgence bottle," as he called it—he having now experimented sufficiently with the phosphorescent slime to achieve a certain amount of increased light—got up suddenly as some drips went down his neck.

He swore explosively.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"Darned leak in the roof again," he said. "Jules! It's chewing-gum drill again."

There ensued noises of furious chewing, and then Polsing's voice broke the silence again.

" Ready, Jules?"

There followed sounds of a grunt associated with a leap, and by the faint light of stars I saw the shadow of an exaggerated figure upreared to the roof.

"That gum comes in handy for plugging up those leaks," said Polsing when Jules had dismounted from his shoulders. "If Peg comes here when they pull this roof down, she'll find a gum quarry."

I had been a captive for a month before an idea struck me. Some say that under such circumstances the human brain, of necessity, works under ideal pressure and conditions. In my case the theory proved often by fact did not follow, at least not until this period of time had elapsed.

One night Jules approached Polsing and tapped a message in the Morse code upon his hand. Polsing, being a Merchant Service skipper, of course knew the code, and after that we conversed with Jules in this way by night and day. Jules, like all French airmen, knew the Morse code, both English and French systems. After that he also asked questions and conversed with us by tapping on his dish, until our guards who were stationed outside unbarred the door

and took our dishes away. If the conversation between the skipper and I was ever too loud, they often came in and smote us into silence

Jules had another method of speaking to us. One day I had this idea. I winked at him, shutting my eye for a long and winking it sharply for a short. I then proposed he should speak to us in this manner by day. By night we placed some luminous slime from the "effulgence bottle" on his eyelid, and by keeping within a couple of feet of him we could see his eyelid signals quite easily. He could now speak to us faster and more easily by this method.

One day, from remarks which the Americans had passed about the day and the month, I knew I had been imprisoned for nearly two months. We had a trying time that day with the remarks passed anent our wasted appearance, and when night came with its vilely monotonous ration of stew, Polsing was nearly broken-hearted; but with the magnificent spirit he possessed he soon rallied and was his jovial, loquacious self once more.

"Jules, old pal," said the skipper to our impassive companion, "I'm hungry. To-day I noticed some little green sprouts peeping out of the far wall. I plucked them and, in the mood I was, I ate them. I hoped they were poisonous, but they're good—here, have one"

He gave me one also, and I found the herb good to the taste.

"In a week's time," continued Polsing, "we will become wholly graminivorous and start gulping our bedding. Our slave-boss, the rug merchant, will add some more shekels to his coffers if we include that trick in our repertoire. The Yanks will be quite bucked at the sight, but on the other hand they might curtail the gum whack and we'll suffer in consequence. To-day I thought of scoffing a few of those black beetles as they came out into the sun—ten thousand of them held a cœnacula on my feet over a sweet biscuit tossed in by that tall Englishman and which fell just short of me."

At this point, while Polsing rambled on, Jules came close to me and held his illuminated eyelids near my eyes.

"H-a-v-e a-n i-d-e-a," he signalled.

"Go on Jules, old man," I said.

"L-e-t u-s t-a-k-e t-u-r-n-s t-o-m-o-r-r-o-w a-t w-i-n-k-i-n-g m-e-s-s-a-g-e-s w-i-t-h o-u-r e-y-e-s a-t o-u-r a-u-d-i-e-n-c-e—s-o-m-e m-a-y u-n-d-e-r-s-t-a-n-d," he explained.

"Polsing!" I said. "Jules has a good plan. We're going to be out of here if those Yanks or the Frenchman know the code."

I explained Jules' idea to the skipper, and next morning, when our visitors presented themselves at the cell grating to witness in their ignorance the discomfort of three of their race as we sat hair-clamped, gagged, and leg-bound, we commenced winking slowly at them in the Morse code.

"H-e-l-pu-s," we winked; then, "N-o-u-s

a-i-d-e-z," alternately and repeatedly.

But none understood.

Days passed, then weeks, of continuous relayed winking, but not a sign of understanding emanated from our varied audience. I never knew before the number of people who did not understand Morse.

English and Americans passed before the grating and stared in at us curiously, sometimes openly hilarious at our winking. The girls thought we were flirtatious, and threw us chocolates, biscuits and even ice-cream as rewards for our attempts at the art.

We became so afflicted with the winking habit that we winked in our sleep, and poor Polsing said he even translated his thoughts into winks. But one day the drama ended without warning and almost with tragedy.

One afternoon Jules was remonstrating with Polsing as to the value of keeping on with the wink-

ing. The Frenchman had Morsed his turn at the collection of sightseers, among whom were our old friends the Americans. Polsing had failed to relieve him and Jules switched his eyes upon the skipper and bade him pluck up a little heart.

Polsing groaned and with a superhuman effort turned round in his leg bonds. I heard his clamped hair actually wrenched out by the effort. The brave fellow then placed his mouth to the whitewashed wall at our backs.

I heard the American girl squeal. "Say, Earle!" she almost screamed. "He's writing with his mouth."

I squinted sideways again to see Polsing, and there he had managed to work saliva from his mouth and was shaping it into words on the whitewashed cell wall at our backs.

He had managed to write three letters, "H-E-L-"

He was trying to write "H-E-L-P!"



"There was a crashing report and one jailer fell shot."

The American girl screamed again, and when I looked round the grating was blotted out by figures of our jailers rushing into our cell.

The devils were beating Polsing about the head with their sticks, and now Jules also, having wrenched his hair out, squirmed about the cell floor round his peg like an angry crocodile's tail, bravely trying to bring the jailers down with his arms and prevent them from killing Polsing.

There was a crashing report and one

jailer fell shot. The other jailers scattered in confusion and another fell crippled as they jammed in the cell door. I looked at the window and there saw the "French guy" with an arm between the gratings holding a smoking revolver.

Ten minutes later, Polsing, Jules and I were released and among friends in the European colony of Sabri. Jules was writing a conversation with our rescuer and

Polsing was standing near him.

"Jules," said Polsing, "good idea that



of mine, writing on the wall with spittle eh?" and he slapped Jules on the back with his open hand.

Jules turned from his chatting and began winking out a message in his perfect English.

"Y-o-u p-o-o-r b-i-g m-a-d-m-a-n. T-h-i-s c-o-u-n-t-r-y-m-a-n o-f m-i-n-e k-n-e-w w-e w-e-r-e w-h-i-t-e m-e-n t-h-e d-a-y b-e-f-o-r-e h-e g-o-t u-s o-u-t—h-e n-o-t-i-c-e-d o-u-r e-y-e-l-i-d-s w-e-r-e w-h-i-t-e."

Jules ceased Morsing by his eyelids and

turned awav.

Polsing turned to me grinning, looking

pale in his head bandages. "Nearly killed for nothing," he groaned. "White eyelids,—the Moors never thought of staining them, and but for this French chappie noticing how rare and queer white eyelids are on coloured gentlemen, we might have been clubbed to death before the visitors' eyes."

The Bright Half Moon Tavern was now quite full of people, and as my winking friend turned, perhaps to becken the "ten-day dickie" garçon, I noticed a small bright

ornament on his watchchain. His eye caught my curious glance, and, winking spasmodically, he unclipped it and placed it

in my hand.

"That's one of the 'little demons,'" he said as he indicated the tiny epparatus with its clips at each end of two connected brass bands. "Fits right hard up on each side of the tongue and then clamps to the loose parts inside the cheeks, holding the tongue down tightly."

I felt disturbed, as if I was really enduring that type of imprisonment, as I passed the gag back to him. But my friend did not offer to take it back, but instead gazed once more round the café before turning to me again.

"Neat little thing, isn't it?" he said. Then he leaned closer to me, peered round him and said:

"Er—excuse me, friend, but I am rather financially embarrassed at present. Some of my friends have

suggested that I should have some copies made to sell as souvenirs of Jules and myself—my friend Jules is also living here in Le Havre—we're just rubbing along, y'know—well, I'm asking a small price for these or anything you would care to extend your sympathy to."

"That's all right, old man," I said, feeling sorry for the chap. "Here's a couple of centuries—of francs—I'll treasure this, my

friend, believe me."

"It may come in handy," replied the Winker, putting the money into his wallet.

"One never knows, perhaps you may win a garrulous wife some day, or squally children—then perhaps you'll bless me—eh—ah, here's my old comrade Jules and his little wife."

The Winker rose and held out his hand to a slightly built man and a girlish-looking woman who were nearing us, making their way between the tables.

"Allow me to introduce you to Madame of Jules," said the Winker. "Er—Mr.——?"

"King," I said.

"Mr. King, of England-Madame Jules

Carnay----'

"Eet sounds lak an ol' joke," observed Madame Carnay, and she and I were about to have a little chat, after I was introduced to Jules, who merely nodded his head, smiled, but retained a closed mouth, of course. I like hearing pretty Frenchwomen talk English, but it was not to be. I turned at hearing the Winker's voice:

"I'm so sorry, Mr. King," he broke in, "but Jules has just told me something by winks and I'm afraid we'll have to leave you. We'll all be glad to see you another time, though." And to my surprise the three of them walked to the door in evident

haste.

"Excuse me, sir," said a voice behind me, as I stood watching the departing trio. I turned to confront the manager of the Half Moon, an American settled down in Le Havre since the War.

"Well?" I grunted.

"Did that long son-of-a-gun touch you for one of those brass hat-clips?" questioned he. "If you mean a funny sort of mouthgag, he did. I paid him two hundred for it," I replied.

"H'm," observed the American, "I thought so. You c'n get 'em in any Froggie hat-shop round here; just come with me a

minute, please."

I followed and he led me across the café into a little window corner. The window was half open but shielded by a curtain. Voices were coming through on a breeze which cooled my mortified cheeks. I recognised two of them and bent to see the Winker, Madame Carnay and Jules—Jules—engaged in a discussion just outside.

I waited only to hear Jules speak, and that gentleman turned to the Winker and

said:

"Why didn't you offer him a size larger, one to keep the dog quiet, Louis?"

The American tapped me on the shoulder. He saved me from the consequences of hurling a near-by plant-pot at the trio.

"Say, bo," comforted the American. "Don't get sore, old man—they've worked it on a stranger every day this week. To-day's Friday—you're the fifth sucker. Come in to-morrow and watch them work it on the sixth, it's an education; and besides, you're lucky, my son. The other four paid for dinners for the three of them, but I liked your face and came along just before they came to suggesting they all sat down and ate somethin'. By the way, just pay for that double dinner at the desk, will you?"

SPENDING.

THERE are three mintages that all may earn
To spend like water or in noble use:
The first is money; few there are who learn,
After much getting, more than soul's abuse.
Gold words there are, wrung from our past inert,
Royal with impress of the kings of mind,
Though many spend on tinsel, hate, and dirt
What might have bought new vision for mankind.
And there's a current coin whose blessing teems
Common as light or air, the shine whereof
Swims with an image of our highest dreams,
Without which days were senseless counters—Love.
O Love, our tragic waste of thee, this most
Is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.
GEOFFREY JOHNSON.

NEW SHOES

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY LINDSAY CABLE

, Miss Brent.

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R. PETER LATIMER, taking his leisurely way through the crowds of Piccadilly Circus, paused ever so briefly to glance at his reflection in a strip of mirror conveniently affixed to a shopfront. Nor should this be accounted to him for vanity, for Peter was no gilded popinjay. He was merely an ordinary young man in a pair of new brown shoes, and afflicted—as in such circumstances are all men, young or old—by the suspicion that his feet looked as conspicuous as they felt.

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But the glance at the mirror went far to dispel that gnawing fear. For the shoes, seen thus, appeared everything that shoes should be, neat but not gaudy, elegant yet refined, shapely but in no way bizarre. At present a shade too yellowish, perhaps, but obviously destined in time to develop that mellow mahogany complexion which is the hall-mark of the Shoe Perfect. Possibly just a trifle on the tight side; but had not their maker assured him, with tears of sincerity in his eyes, that they would almost immediately stretch?

Altogether very satisfactory shoes; and Peter, much comforted, was about to resume his way when he became aware of one who paused beside him and spoke his name, saying:

"Good afternoon, Mr. Latimer."

A simple remark enough; yet it caused Peter to start violently and whirl about, snatching off his hat with an urgency very disturbing to the coiffure. For the voice belonged to the one person above all others he most desired to meet, then or at any time. A girl, of course; and (equally, of course) no ordinary girl. Rather the kind of girl—or so Mr. Latimer believed—for whose sake wars are waged, continents discovered, empires overthrown. The kind of girl for whom a man will commit anything from bigamy to free verse. The kind of girl Cleopatra must have been in her first season.

Said Peter, turning red about the ears and stammering slightly:

"Oh—ah—good afternoon, Miss Brent."
"I thought," said Miss Brent, "you were going to cut me dead. I never saw a man so interested in a sweet-shop window."

"I—er—oh, no," said Peter. "No, I—this is a bit of luck. You—are you going anywhere? I was just thinking about you.

A bit of luck for me, I mean.

Inept words, undoubtedly; but his worst enemy had never described Mr. Latimer as a squire of dames. In masculine society he could sustain his share of a conversation with ease, if with no startling originality of thought, but when confronted by one of the superior sex—and particularly Miss Brent he became a tongue-tied zany, acutely conscious of his hands and feet, uncertain what to say and how to say it. He had not known Miss Brent very long, but long enough to realise that, were he denied her company at the altar, he must go unmarried to his grave. Yet he could not tell her so. Though he yearned to dazzle her with epigrams and witty comments on affairs, he could only goggle at her and emit vague vocal sounds, devoid of rhythm and frequently of sense. This is what Love can do to a young man ordinarily sane enough.

"I'm going to the pictures," said Miss Brent. "There's a new one at the Olympic

I want to see."

"No, really?" said Peter, all agog. "I say, may I—look here, come with me, will you? I've absolutely nothing else to do."

This invitation might, perhaps, have been more graciously worded, and it was with the faintest suggestion of a smile that Miss Brent replied:

"That would be lovely—if you're quite

sure you can spare the time."

Behold, therefore, Mr. Latimer and his lady setting off together, the former walking as if on air and wearing that expression of fatuous complacency peculiar to young men in his condition, the latter perfectly composed and chatting amiably of this and that. Thus they came very shortly to the impres-

sive portal of the Olympic Cinema, where the cheapest seat costs two-and-fourpence and the orchestra is easily the most audible in London. And now remark the unaccountable vagaries of Providence, the malicious perversity of Fate; for it was here, on the very threshold of sanctuary, that a hearty hand smote Peter suddenly upon the back and a hearty voice cried in his shrinking ear:

"Hullo, young Latimer! Whither away?"
Peter started, choked, coughed, turned and saw the last person on earth he desired to meet, then or at any time. Mr. Reginald

Paget, to wit.

A large and jovial young man was Mr. Paget; one of those breezy souls who go through life slapping people on the back and guffawing loudly on the smallest provocation. A young man with a weakness for elementary practical jokes and no inferiority complex. The kind of young man, in short, that Mr. Latimer was not. Which explains why Mr. Latimer evinced no delight at this meeting, but replied in a noticeably unhilarious tone:

"Hullo, Paget. Sorry, but we're just

"Afternoon, Phyllis," observed Mr. Paget gallantly. "Jolly nice you look—as usual. I've just called at your place, but you were out. Are you taking this little fellow for a run round the Park?"

"Mr. Latimer," answered Miss Brent expressionlessly, "is taking me to the

pictures."

Mr. Paget frowned very slightly and looked at Peter with an air of mingled surprise and annoyance, as might be worn by a greyhound unexpectedly attacked by a hare.

"Is that so?" said Mr. Paget. Then his face cleared, and he smiled genially. "Jolly good idea! I'll come too—I've got an hour to spare."

Miss Brent shot a sidelong glance at

Peter, but she said no word.

"But——" began Peter warmly, and then stopped. After all, if this pestilent fellow could not see that his room was preferable to his company, what was to be done? His inclination was to dot Mr. Paget a brisk one on the jaw, but such fancies may not be indulged in the presence of a lady. Moreover, for all he knew, Miss Brent might approve this addition to the party, for Mr. Paget had long been honoured with her acquaintance—was he not privileged to call her "Phyllis"? For these reasons the misguided Mr. Latimer swallowed his exasperation and in a brooding silence led the

way to the Olympian box-office. Life, which but a moment ago had worn so roseate a complexion, now seemed very grey.

"Pay for me, young Latimer, will you?" requested Mr. Paget cheerily. "I'm broke

till I cash a cheque at the club."

Peter gulped slightly and did as ordered, thinking about Mr. Paget as no gentleman ought to think about another. Shepherded by richly caparisoned minions, the trio climbed a broad stair, negotiated a swinging door and entered the hall of darkness.

And here occurred an incident, slight enough in itself, which was to have unforeseen and far-reaching results. For a female servitor, eccentrically clad and preceded by an erratic beam of light, materialised from the gloom to inform them that—such was the British public's craving to view Miss Laurel Darling and Mr. Otis Truelove in "Passion's Flame"—three seats in any one row were not available. The best that could be offered were two seats together, with a third in the row immediately in front.

"Good enough," said Mr. Paget jovially.
"We'll sit here, Phyllis. See you later,

young Lat--"

He got no further, for the sudden impact of young Latimer's shoulder sent him staggering back. Even a worm will turn, and Peter, save when alone with his adored, was anything but worm-like. And now, thrusting Mr. Paget ruthlessly aside, he steered Miss Brent masterfully into a vacant seat and sat down beside her so resolutely that the atmosphere vibrated and his neighbours glanced at him in pained reproof. Mr. Paget, his jovial countenance disfigured by a lowering scowl, had perforce to content himself with the lonely seat in front.

"Can you see all right?" inquired Peter of Miss Brent, his tone implying that a negative answer would cause him to rise and clear the theatre with a battle-axe.

"Beautifully, thanks," replied the dam-

sel. "Can you?"

"I can see all I want to see," said Peter, as meaningly as he dared. "But I wish——Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Peter hastily. "Touch

of—of cramp. Gone now."

In so saying he lied, but excusably; for what young man would willingly confess to his lady that his shoes are too tight? That sudden throb of agony in his right foot apprised Peter of two disconcerting facts: (1) that his new shoes were not stretching so rapidly as might be wished, and (2) that the

small and hitherto quiescent corn on his right little toe was beginning to feel the pinch. And with the realisation came another stab of pain, so that he gasped faintly and writhed in his seat; this was followed by a steady, relentless ache that increased in severity with every passing moment. Hell—as those who have ever found themselves in a similar predicament

while he suffered heroically, making no moan; but at last—for a man can stand only so much, and he had stood more than that—he reached furtively downward, unfastened his shoe-lace and withdrew his tortured foot from the shoe.

The relief was instant and so profound that he could have shouted his delight. Suppressing the impulse, he wriggled his



"A hearty hand smote Peter suddenly on the back and a hearty voice cried in his shrinking ear: 'Hullo, young Latimer! Whither away?'"

will readily agree—knows no fury like an angered corn.

It is probable that Miss Brent attributed her escort's silence during the next few minutes to his absorption in the gripping drama unfolding on the screen. But Peter had no thought for anything save his foot, which now felt about twice its natural size and appeared to be on fire. Time passed, enfranchised toes ecstatically and gave his attention to more agreeable matters.

"Corking good film, this!" he remarked cordially. A most inaccurate statement, but he was in the mood to discover hidden merit in a tapioca pudding.

"Oh," said Miss Brent, "I thought you were asleep—you were so quiet... I can't say I care much for it myself." She

leaned forward and addressed Mr. Paget. "Like it, Reggie?"

"Bilge," replied Mr. Paget succinctly.
"Rather over your head, old man, I

suppose," said Peter buoyantly.

Mr. Paget said nothing, very markedly.

Silence again, while on the screen Miss
Laurel Darling endured those incredible
vicissitudes which apparently form the daily
lot of the Good Girl in New York City.
Peter, his critical faculty still in abeyance,
sat more or less enthralled until the drama
had wound tortuously to its predestined end,
leaving Miss Darling, all teeth and eyelashes,
clasped to the improbably imposing chest
of Mr. Truelove. As the lights went up:

"Well," said Peter, leaning back, "I'm glad she got through all right. I thought she would, somehow." Conscious that the pain in his foot had now quite abated, he began cautiously to feel about for his shoe.

"She didn't deserve to," said Miss Brent acidly, "in that ghastly wig. She—have you lost something, Mr. Latimer?"

"Eh? Oh—no, thanks," said Peter

absently. "No. Oh, no."

Another falsehood, for he had indeed lost something. His shoe—no less. To his incredulous dismay, his questing foot, groping hither and you about the floor, encountered no obstruction. though it seemed, his shoe had disappeared. For a moment he sat stunned by this discovery; then as the lights dimmed again, he stooped hurriedly and swept a feverish hand beneath his seat and those on either His heart leaped as his fingers closed upon an indisputable shoe, only to sink again as a sharp cry of indignation from his right-hand neighbour—a stout female party in bombazine—informed him of his error. He shrank away, covered with confusion and appalled by this calamity. His shoe was gone; so much was depressingly obvious. No doubt he had unwittingly kicked it away at some crucial moment in Miss Laurel Darling's affairs. That, he reflected bitterly, was just the bone-headed sort of thing he would do. But where was it now? And how to retrieve it? As he faced this horrifying problem:

"You have lost something, Mr. Latimer," said Miss Brent. "What is it?"

Only a person lamentably ignorant of the psychology of the youthful male would be surprised at Mr. Latimer's failure at this point to confess the truth. Peter was normally no coward, but he simply had not the nerve to publish the facts of his case;

for what would Miss Brent think-what would any girl think-of a fellow who suffered from corns and shed his shoes in cinemas? A corn is the least heroic of afflictions, having neither the glamour of a sabre-wound nor the pathos of brain-fever, but ranking with mumps and gumboils as a legitimate subject for ribaldry. sympathy, but only ridicule awaits its victim: and Peter-like most of us-dreaded ridicule as a cat dreads water. Furthermore, his spirit quailed at the thought of playing hunt-the-slipper under the derisive gaze of his neighbours, with Miss Brent inevitably sharing that embarrassing publicity. Never would she forgive him for bringing such humiliation upon her.

So, avoiding her eye:

"Er—no—yes—well, only a—a box of matches," he said, in an unnatural kind of voice.

"Don't let that spoil your evening," said Miss Brent. "I've got some—here you are."

With a hand that shook a little, Peter lit a cigarette for her and one for himself. Then he leaned forward and thrust his cigarette-case invitingly over Mr. Paget's shoulder.

"No, thanks," said Mr. Paget coldly.

"Look here," said Peter, in a low and urgent whisper, "I—I've lost my shoe. I wish you'd——"

"Lost your what?" said Mr. Paget, astonished.

"My shoe. It was hurting my foot, so I took it off, and—and now I can't find it. I must have kicked it away, or something. You might have a look round, will you? Quietly, I mean."

For an instant Mr. Paget sat very still, only his shoulders quivering slightly. Then he nodded and bent forward, while Peter waited in an agony of suspense. But all too soon Mr. Paget sat up, half turned and in a compassionate undertone reported:

"Not here, I'm afraid."

"Oh," said Peter flatly.

"Better ask one of those girls to hunt for it, what?"

"Oh, no! Not on any account. I—"
"You seem very worried about those matches of yours, Mr. Latimer," put in Miss Brent, a somewhat puzzled witness of this by-play. "Was it a very valuable box? A Present from Margate, or something like that? You can have mine, if you like."

"Oh, no, thanks awfully," said Peter, swallowing hard. "It doesn't matter—it wasn't—it doesn't matter, really."

And with that he relapsed limply into his seat, staring pallidly at vacancy. On the screen an alleged comedy pursued its rowdy way, while the building rang with the happy laughter of the easily-amused. But young Mr. Latimer never so much as smiled; he sat as one crushed by an overwhelming sorrow, his mouth open, his eyes glazed, his brow furrowed with despair. He looked exactly like a man who has irretrievably lost a shoe in a crowded West End cinema. . . .

To all things, comic films included, there must come in time an end. And in due course, the last custard-pie having achieved its billet, the lights went up again. Miss Brent, turning to her neighbour, noted his expression and nodded comprehendingly.

"Yes," she said. "It was rather like that. But I suppose we're too snobbish,

really. . . . Going, Reggie?"

For Mr. Paget, hat in hand, had risen from his seat.

"Sorry, Phyllis," said he. "I must push off now. Got to meet a man at the club. Mind if I look in at your place later on? I want to talk to you about something."

For a space Miss Brent considered him thoughtfully. Then:

"I'm not sure," she said, "what time I shall get home. So I think——"

"I'll chance it, anyway," said Mr. Paget. He looked at Peter, and smiled. An odd, faintly sinister, faintly triumphant smile; the smile of one who sees his enemy delivered, gagged and bound, into his very hands. A queer, disturbing, ominous smile. "So long, young Latimer. Sorry about the matches—or whatever it was."

He nodded curtly and turned away. not before Peter had time to remark a curious bulge defiling the outline of his coat -a bulge which certainly had not been there half an hour before. But for that suggestive smile, Peter would have given this bulge no second thought, and even now he was slow to grasp its true significance. Then, very suddenly, he understood. With a loud cry of rage and anguish, he sprang to his feet, impelled by some vague idea of giving chase. But he was too late. Already Mr. Paget, moving with suspicious celerity, was gone beyond recall; and with him-as Peter now knew with absolute and terrifying certainty -went fifty per cent of young Mr. Latimer's footwear.

"What's the matter, Mr. Latimer?" asked Miss Brent wonderingly. "Are you feeling queer?"

A shrewd surmise, for Peter was feeling very queer indeed. With the sudden insight often born in such moments of stress. he divined the evil purpose behind Mr. Paget's treachery. Mr. Paget, surprised to discover in a young Latimer a possible rival, and annoyed by that forceful thrust from young Latimer's shoulder, had taken steps to teach young Latimer his place. Himself a snappy dresser, Mr. Paget knew that a man bereft of one shoe is a man shorn of all dignity, a mere figure of fun. Even Phyllis Brent, notorious for her kindness to underdogs, must laugh at such a man; and it is well known that when laughter enters at the door love departs by the fire-escape. Her laughter, too, would have a slightly acid note, for a man who will lose a shoe in a West End cinema is plainly a perfect fool, unworthy of Beauty's interest. Don Juan himself could not have coped with such a handicap, for between sex-appeal and soxappeal there is a great gulf fixed.

These bitter thoughts crossed Peter's mind in about one-fortieth of the time needed to record them. Perceiving that Miss Brent was gazing at him in open curiosity and that the occupant of the seat behind was becoming audibly restive, he pulled himself together and sat down with a thud, thrusting his shoeless foot well out

of sight.

"Oh—I'm all right," he said, with a pale, uncertain smile. "Just remembered something I wanted to tell Paget. But I'll tell him next time I see him. Bit warm in here, isn't it?"

"Like an oven," agreed Miss Brent.
"Would you like to go? You're looking awfully wan."

"Oh, no!" said Peter hurriedly. "No,

rather not. Not yet, I mean."

His tone carried conviction, for he felt that he required time to think. If confession had been difficult before, it was almost impossible now. He could disclose Mr. Paget's perfidy, but—lacking any sort of proof—he could not hope that his incredible tale would be believed by one so pure in heart as Miss Brent. Besides, the man Paget, if subsequently taxed with the crime, had only to deny it, and young Mr. Latimer would appear to all as the kind of unscrupulous cad who would seek to discredit a rival in the latter's absence. All of which, as Peter felt very sure, the man Paget had foreseen.

In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the Topical Budget failed to grip young Mr. Latimer's interest. Two problems occupied his mind: how to extricate himself from this frightful situation, and how to make the man Paget wish that he had never been born. And he was still vainly pondering these matters when, to his alarm, he became aware that Miss Brent was gathering up her belongings in the manner of one who has had enough.

increased. But she was a kind-hearted girl, and she knew that there is no accounting for tastes.

"All right," she said obligingly. "If you can stand it, I can. But I must go soon, or Mother will think I've eloped."

For young Mr. Latimer the half-hour that followed was sheer purgatory. In vain did



"With a loud cry of rage and anguish, Peter sprang to his feet, impelled by some vague idea of giving chase."

"I say," said Peter anxiously, "you're not—we needn't go yet, need we?"

"But we've seen it all," answered Miss Brent, in some astonishment. "Here's 'Passion's Flame' again."

sion's Flame 'again."

"Good Lord!" said Peter, breaking into
a light perspiration. "So it is! But
couldn't we—would you mind if we saw a
bit of it again?"

Miss Brent's astonishment perceptibly

Miss Darling repeat her girlish gestures, in vain did Mr. Truelove display his manly grin; Peter thought that he had never seen two persons so repulsive, nor a film so utterly deficient in sense. Not that he looked at it more than he could help; all his faculties were concentrated on his own dilemma. Though he persuaded Miss Brent to linger on until they were ejected by the management, sooner or later they must leave this

accursed place—and what then? What then?

The dreaded moment came sooner than he expected. For suddenly Miss Brent swayed a little and said in a small, apologetic voice:

"Mr. Latimer—do you mind if we go? Awfully silly of me, but I'm feeling rather

gave upon a deserted passage, at the far end of which a second door let them out into an equally deserted side-street.

"Ah!" said Miss Brent, breathing deep of the cool evening air. "That's better. I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Latimer. I'm not often taken that way, but I've been laid up with 'flu, and it's left me rather feeble."



funny. It's so fearfully hot in here."
At once—for such is Love—all thought of his own affairs was swept from Peter's mind. In a flash he ceased to be a palsied oaf, and became a man of action, a very tower of strength. His shoelessness forgotten—or, what is even more to his credit, ignored—he rose and placed a steady hand beneath Miss Brent's slim elbow.

"I'm sorry," he said contritely. "I'm a thoughtless hog. Lean on me, and we'll be out of here in a jiffy."

Skilfully he steered her down a gloomy gangway to a door labelled EXIT. This

"All right now?" asked Peter, somewhat self-consciously—for the pavement struck chill through his chaste merino half-hose, and, now that his lady was herself again, apprehension enveloped him anew. The average Londoner is a phlegmatic soul, but not so phlegmatic that he can gaze unmoved upon a respectably-dressed young man with only one shoe; and in imagination Peter heard the joyous comments of the mob, the derisive mockery of the young. Happily it was now quite dark, and the street illighted; also at that moment—as proof that even Providence has her generous impulses—

a vagrant taxi slid hooting round the corner.

"Practically, thanks," answered Miss "But I'm afraid I've spoiled your Brent. evening. You were so very struck with the Darling female, weren't you? like to go back?"

"Heavens, no!" said Peter fervently.

"Hey, taxi!"

The taxi stopped; and Peter, handling Miss Brent as if she were a fragile parcel, long overdue at her destination, bundled her into the vehicle and followed so swiftly that even to a slow-motion camera his feet would have appeared as a meaningless blur. Through the speaking-tube he gave the address to the driver; then he tucked his foot into a remote corner and turned to his companion.

"Sure you're all right now?"

Miss Brent nodded bravely and gave him a smile that shook him to the core.

"Only a slight muzziness, and that's passing off. You really needn't take me home, you know, Mr. Latimer. It's miles

out of your way."

"Oh, not at all," said Peter. He spoke abstractedly, for the same thought had just occurred to him. He saw now that it would have been far wiser to have despatched Miss Brent alone, and himself chartered the next taxi that came along; for thus he might have won in safety to his own quarters, and Miss Brent have remained for ever in ignorance of his shameful secret. Unfortunately, it was now too late to think about that; it remained only for him to escape at the earliest possible moment. With any luck, he could take leave of her at her door and dart back into the taxi with the hiatus in his footwear still undisclosed.

It appeared, however, that on this point Miss Brent held other views. For when presently the taxi rattled to a halt at the neat little house which sheltered her and those fortunates who were her parents, she sat up, shook herself briskly, and in a reassuringly normal voice observed:

"Now you're here, you'll come in, won't

you? I'm quite all right now."

At any other time this invitation would have caused young Mr. Latimer to fling up his hat in joy before shouting an affirmative. But now he merely turned puce in the face and began to mumble unintelligible excuses. He had foreseen this crisis, but he had evolved no plans for dealing with it.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Brent briskly. "Of course you must come in. haven't been to see us for ages, and Father's got three new golf stories. You'll have to hear them sooner or later, so you may as well get it over now."

"Thanks awfully, but I don't think—

if you don't mind-

"Come along."

"No, but really, I—I'd rather not.

"You'd rather not?" echoed Miss Brent incredulously. She was by no means a conceited young lady, but she was not accustomed to have young men refuse her invitations.

"Yes-no. The fact is, I can't.

see, I've got---"

"Another appointment? Oh, I see," said Miss Brent, and the temperature within the taxi dropped several degrees. "In that case, I mustn't keep you, of course."
"No, no!" said Peter, beginning to

perspire again. "It isn't that. But I

can't—that is, I'd rather—

"Don't let me keep you," said Miss Brent, making ready to depart. "I'd hate to think I'd made you late. You must be cursing me for bringing you so far out of your way.

"I haven't got another appointment!" said Peter, now on the verge of hysteria. "It's simply that I——"

"Never mind," said Miss Brent, in a faraway voice. "It really doesn't matter, does it? And I quite understand, of course. Thanks so much for bringing me home. Good-bye."

"But look here—can I see you to-

morrow?"

"I'm sorry," returned Miss Brent, very remote and queenly. "I shall be very busy to-morrow, I'm afraid. Good-bye, Mr. Latimer." And before the harassed Peter could utter another word or make any move to stay her, she had slipped out of the taxi, crossed the pavement and was fitting her key in the door.

Peter, a prey to a variety of unpleasant emotions, began reluctantly to alight. enter that house half shod was quite impossible, but it was no less impossible to drive tamely away, with no more said and matters left in this unsatisfactory state; nor could be trumpet his further excuses from a range of about five yards. So, cursing his luck, he descended gingerly to the pavement, intending to gain the shelter of the railings before re-opening the conversation. But he had taken no more than a step when he stopped abruptly, staring.

Down the street, swinging a jaunty cane and humming a little merry air, came a



"'Well!' said Miss Brent, from the doorstep. . . . 'If you've quite finished your romp, perhaps you'll tell me what it means?'"

thing of a shock, therefore, to discover young Latimer still in Phyllis's company, exhibiting no symptoms of embarrassment or regret. Mr. Paget, frowning, glanced at young Latimer's feet; then he looked at Latimer and smiled his expansive smile.

"Well, well!" said Mr. Paget. "Here's One-Shoe Pete, as I live! You'll catch

cold, old boy, if you don't-"

He paused, for young Latimer had taken a sudden quick step forward, and there was that in young Latimer's eye which sent a cold shiver down Mr. Paget's spine. For the first time he noticed that young Latimer, though shorter than himself, was approximately twice as broad; that young Latimer's lower jaw resembled the toe of a football boot; that young Latimer's hair was of a truculent reddish shade. Mr. Paget, belatedly observing these portents, felt suddenly ill at ease, but the knowledge that Miss Brent was watching events compelled him to stand his ground, as young Latimer, saying no word, continued to advance.

"Why so dumb, old boy?" said Mr. Paget.
"Couldn't you find your box of mat——"

Young Latimer's massive hand sang through the air. Mr. Paget gave a little squeal and ducked; but the hand fell squarely upon his beautiful bowler hat, crushing it down upon his eyes. And as he struggled to wrench it off, young Latimer poked him sharply in the waistcoat, so that he grunted gustily, and then jerked out his snappy tie and gently tweaked his nose. Through his hat Mr. Paget was aware of young Latimer's voice, saying:

"That for a start, old boy."

Mr. Paget, at last emerging from his hat, beheld young Latimer's face within six inches of his own—and it was not a face that he found pleasure in beholding. It was not a particularly angry face; it was rather the calm, resolute face of one about to commit justifiable homicide for the benefit of mankind. Cold fear attacked Mr. Paget's vitals, and he fell back a little. But the face followed him, and he saw that young Latimer's right hand, looking like a chunk of granite, was beginning very slowly to travel backward. Whereupon Mr. Paget's nerve broke suddenly, and he went away from that place.

And after him, limping slightly, but moving so rapidly that he seemed to touch the ground only here and there, went young Latimer. For the moment Peter had entirely forgotten Phyllis, the taxi-driver, Mr. Brent's golf-stories—everything, in

fact, save the wrong he had suffered at Mr. Paget's hands and his yearning to convert Mr. Paget into the most complicated hospital case in modern medical history. Mr. Paget, suspecting this ambition, was going like the wind, but Peter, despite the handicap of his shoeless foot, was fast overhauling him when the chase came to an abrupt and unexpected end. For Mr. Paget, rounding a corner at too high a speed, skidded, stumbled, cried out in affright and went heavily to the ground.

Peter, pulling up, looked down at his prostrate enemy and smiled—a smile no more mirthful than Mr. Paget's own.

"Get up," said Peter gently, "or I'll—" He stopped, as one attacked by inspiration. His smile widened and became a happy grin. "No—stay where you are. Tell me—what's your size in shoes, old boy?"

"VELL!" said Miss Brent, from the doorstep, whence she had witnessed the start of the chase, but not its finish. "If you've quite finished your romp, perhaps you'll tell me what it means?" Her voice was no longer remote, for any woman would rather be inquisitive than angry.

Peter smiled at her—a wide, care-free and confident smile. The exercise had done him good, and he felt extremely fit. His shoes were, perhaps, a trifle too large for him, but then he preferred them that way. He felt extraordinarily light-hearted, sure of

himself, and unafraid.

"First of all," he said, "do you mind?"

"Mind?"

"About him."

"No," said Miss Brent composedly.
"As a matter of fact, I'm glad. I don't know what he did to you, but lately I haven't been liking him much. I used to, but I know him better now. That was why I didn't want him to come here to-night, and why I wanted you to come in—partly."

"Good enough!" said Peter. He paused, drew a long breath, summoned all his newfound resolution, and went on: "Then look here—I—you—look here, Phyllis, marry me, will you? I do want you to,

frightfully."

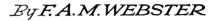
Five seconds' interval, while the world

stood still.

"Well," said Miss Brent, "I've been wondering when you'd ask me that, but I never thought it would be on a doorstep. Why not pay off the taxi and then come in and tell me all about it, Peter?"

Our Great Public Schools

THEIR TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS & GAMES





F a composite history of all the public schools is ever written it will be, in reality, the history of England, since the British Empire has been in the main built up by the founders of

the schools and the pupils who gained their knowledge and had their characters moulded in those institutions.

The question which is the oldest scholastic institution in England has not been, and I suppose never will be, satisfactorily settled, since authentic records of some foundations have long since vanished behind

the veil of antiquity.

There is a claim that the history of the King's School, Canterbury, can be traced right back to the advent of Augustine in 597 A.D. The late Mr. Charles H. Ashdown, a great authority upon mediæval matters, adduced proof of the foundation of St. Alban's School by Abbott Ulsinus in St. Alban's Abbey in 948 A.D.; St. Peter's School, York, dates back to 700, and there is definite notice of it by Alcuin; and, finally, Asser, the biographer of King Alfred, states that the King sent one of his sons to a school at Winchester. On the statement of such an authority it seems fair to assume the existence of a Winchester School in the ninth century, which some historians have suggested was founded in 679 A.D., just after the see was established, that is to say, more than seven hundred years before the



Winchester College buildings were finished in 1393.

Kings and prelates, and more especially warrior-prelates, were the founders of our English public schools, and thus such names

as those of King Alfred, King Henry VI, Augustine, Aelfric, Alcuin, Alexander Neckham, John Lyon, Walter of Merton, William of Wykeham and Richard of Bury, will never be forgotten.

All the early institutions were under the direction of the national leaders and closely associated with the national life, and through the medium of the free grammar schools men of humble origin attained to the honours of high ecclesiastical dignity. For example, William of Wykeham, a most magnificent prelate, founder of Winchester College and worthy forerunner of Cardinal Wolsey, "Was the son of a stout yeoman, whose ancestors for generations had ploughed the same land, knelt at the same altar and paid due customs and service to the lord of the manor." Of like origin was Henry Chichele, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who led the ecclesiastical thanksgiving for the great victory of the English arms at Agincourt in 1415. He established the Chichele Chest at Oxford University for poor students and was the founder of All Souls' College, Oxford, and of the College Hospital and Grammar School at Higham Ferrers in Northamptonshire.

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When one realises the vast antiquity of our schools and the romance attaching to the history, nay, the very names of their founders, it is not hard to understand the sacredness of the customs and time-hallowed traditions which, in many instances, have been preserved from one generation to another and still survive.

Our Public Schools, in the main, were originally Grammar Schools, but Winchester and Eton, each with an unbroken history of some six hundred years, are unique, not only in England but throughout the world.

In 1382 William of Wykeham founded the "Seinte Marie College of Wynchestre" and allied it with New College, Oxford, which also he had built and endowed, and in 1440,

passages in prose and verse recited by some of the senior boys, who, for the occasion, don evening clothes with silk stockings and knee-breeches.

The date is said to have been fixed to commemorate the birthday of King George III, who was a great patron of Eton. An Old Etonian tells me that he believes this holiday was first granted at the King's instance and, by his further request, was made an annual affair. The same informant suggests that the Procession of the Boats was probably the boys' idea for celebrating the event. In any case, processions of various kinds on the Thames were quite common, and Pepys, I think, refers to some in his day.

Other authorities suggest that the Fourth of June celebration, with its picturesque



[Sport and General.

PROCESSION OF BOATS.

thirty-six years after Wykeham's death, King Henry VI established a Royal Foundation at Eton and called it "The College of the Blessed Marie of Etone beside Wyndsore." He founded, also, King's College, Cambridge, to which Eton "sendeth annually her ripe fruit."

Needless to say, Eton has perhaps more "peculiarities" than almost any other place of education.

The Fourth of June is one of Eton's great days, for then the time-honoured school celebrates its Speech Day and world-famous Old Etonians re-unite at their Alma Mater.

It is then, also, that the old Upper School is once more thronged by a large audience of Etonians and visitors who listen to selected "Procession of Boats," represents the modern form of two much more ancient festivals.

Very long ago there was a custom at Eton of electing a Boy Bishop from among the scholars. This election took place upon the Feast of St. Hugh, November 17th, but it is improbable that the mock-prelate entered upon his ministrations until the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6th, having regard to the ordinance of Henry VI that on the Feast of St. Nicholas, "and not by any means on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, we allow divine service, except the sacred portions of the mass, to be performed and said by a Boy Bishop of the scholars, to be chosen from among them yearly for the purpose."

This practice was common in many schools, notable among them being St. Paul's. The custom was, however, prohibited by proclamation of Henry VIII in 1542, and, although it survived in some places well into the reign of Elizabeth, was probably at once abandoned at Eton, since it was certainly not extant when William Malim became Head Master in 1560.

The Boy Bishop and his assistants were usually known as "Nicholas and his Clerks," and robed in exact imitation of the clergy whose offices they parodied.

There is considerable divergence of opinion as to whether the "Eton Montem"

Bishop's pastoral staff with the Montem banner.

About the time of the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul each year, at nine o'clock on a morning chosen by the Head Master, the boys used to go out to the Hill (ad montem), where they initiated the freshmen of the year and from them exacted a small toll. Salt played a big part in the ceremony, and the procession, even in its earliest days, was of a military seeming.

After two hundred years had elapsed a rule was passed in 1775 that Montem could be allowed to interrupt the ordinary routine of the School only once in three years.



A "WALL" GAME IN PROGRESS.

[Sport and General.

succeeded the ritual of the proscribed Boy Bishops, or whether its origin is to be found in the pilgrimages of mediæval Etonians to some long-forgotten shrine which stood once upon Salt Hill. Another theory is that Montem was an imitation at Eton of "Hills" at Winchester. There would, however, appear to be little similarity between the daily adjournments of the Wykehamists to the playground on St. Catherine's Hill and the annual, and, later, tri-annual, Eton pilgrimage to Salt Hill, near Slough.

In favour of the first theory, however, a reasonable parallel may be drawn between the Boy Bishop and the Captain of Montem, the Deacons with the Salt-Bearers and the By that time the custom of collecting "salt," i.e. money, from all and sundry to help the Captain of Montem, who was the Senior Colleger, with his further education at Cambridge, had become well established.

A good deal of anxiety was often caused in this connection, since the Montem collection was worth anything from £200 to £800 to the lucky Montem Captain, and the boy who stood first in the School lists at the beginning of summer might lose his honorarium, if circumstances created among the seventy fellows at King's College, Cambridge, a vacancy, which the Senior Scholar was bound to fill within twenty days.

Therefore, on the night of the critical eye.

all Collegers sat up until midnight. If no messenger had arrived by that hour there was a shout of "Montem Sure!" and a slamming of heavy shutters, which could be heard even in distant Windsor.

During the eighteenth century Montem was frequently attended by royalty; in 1796 and 1799, in fact, George the Third, mounted on horseback, personally marshalled the crowd.

For this festival all the boys taking part were gorgeously apparelled and held titular rank. The Senior King's Scholar was Captain of Montem, and the next six King's Scholars were styled respectively, College Salt-Bearer, Marshall, Ensign, Lieutenant, Sergeant-Major and Steward. The other King's Scholars were Sergeants and Runners and the Captain of the Oppidans a Salt-Bearer; other Oppidans in the Sixth Form were Sergeants and of the Fifth Form, Corporals. These wore scarlet tail-coats, white trousers and cocked hats and carried swords.

The lower boys and Fifth Form Collegers were arrayed in blue coats with brass buttons, white waistcoats and trousers, and carried thin white poles, from which they were known as Pole-men.

The Salt-Bearers and Runners were very fancy costumes and carried satin moneybags and painted staves with flat tops on which were engraved Latin or Greek texts.

The Salt-Bearers and Runners were accompanied by paid attendants, often armed with pistols, to protect them from foot-pads and highwaymen.

To those who gave money a pinch of salt was tendered; but, later, a little printed ticket bearing the date and the legend "Mos pro lege" or "Pro More et Monte" replaced the salt.

Montem began with a breakfast given in Hall by the Captain to the Sixth and Fifth Forms. "Absence" was then called, the boys marched twice round the School Yard and into Weston's Yard, where the Ensign waved the great emblazoned banner. The Corporals then drew their swords and severed the Pole-men's staves, after which the procession marched to Salt Hill, stepping to the martial music of two or three regimental bands.

On the crest of Salt Hill the ceremony closed with the Ensign again waving the banner, and "Absence" was called on the Hill at midday, after which there was a general adjournment to the Castle and Windmill Inns for luncheon.



[Sport and General.

TWO TYPES OF ETON DRESS.

The orthodox top hat and everyday dress, and the Fourth of June knee breeches and stockings.

Fifth Form boys, incidentally, were allowed to wear their scarlet Montem coats until the end of term and thereby earned the nick-name of "Lobsters." During the holidays these same scarlet coats were to be seen in many hunting fields.

By the early 'forties the Great Western Railway was opened from Slough and brought many undesirable people from London; so in 1847 Montem was prohibited, Dr. Hawtrey compensating the Senior Colleger with a gift of £200 from his own pocket.

Since Dr. Hawtrey put an end to an ancient custom, which, undoubtedly, was not without its evil influence, the Fourth of June has gained greater importance as a special gathering-day for Old Etonians; but perhaps the sole reason for the continued observance of George the Third's birthday is because that of his successor fell in the holidays.

Just as one may find a parallel between the ceremonies attending the election of the Boy Bishop and the pilgrimage to Salt Hill, so, also, may one trace an analogy between the Montem march and the Procession of the Boats, which starts from Brocas every Fourth of June.

Year after year the Fourth of June cele-

brations attract crowds of visitors to Eton to hear the speeches and see the prizes presented; but, most of all, to witness the Procession of the Boats and admire the uniforms of the oarsmen and coxswains.

In the early days of this unique water carnival crews certainly wore distinctive costumes, which were dictated by the fancy of the moment. For example the crew of the ten-oared *Monarch*, the first boat in order of precedence, have, upon several occasions, appeared as galley-slaves chained to their oars.

Early in the nineteenth century, however, fancy costumes gave place to a regular uniform, resembling closely that which is now worn.

The uniform decreed comprised a darkblue cloth jacket and a straw hat with the name of the boat embroidered on the hat ribbon. Boys in the Upper Boats wore dark-blue trousers and those in the Lower Boats trousers of white jean.

The coxswains, however, continued to wear such fancy costumes as their own inclination dictated until 1828, after which year Royal Navy uniforms were adopted, each cox being clad as an admiral, captain or lieutenant, according to the precedence of the boat he steered.

The ordinary tillers of the boats, incidentally, were, upon festive occasions, replaced by others fashioned like serpents and garlanded with oak leaves.

In early days each boat sported a large distinctive flag—possibly another link with

Montem; there was also the custom of carrying an extra person, who was called a "sitter." He sat, usually, behind the cox, or may, upon occasion, himself have acted in that capacity. It was the "privilege" of the "sitter" to provide refreshment-mostly of a liquid nature—for the crew. One cannot say when the custom ceased, but it was probably when an "eight" began to take its more modern form.

In any case, the "sitter" seems never to have been any too comfortable, for Canning, rowed up the river in this capacity on June 4th, 1824, is said to have expressed fears for his safety, despite the breadth of the Monarch of that era

It is a singular circumstance that during the years of John Keate's rule, 1809-34, neither the Provost nor the Head Master was supposed to be cognisant of the "mimic squadrons" and "boyish pageantry" which the King and everyone else witnessed; although, in point of fact, Keate, who had discussed all the necessary arrangements with the Captain of the Oppidans, thus leaving the Captain of the Boats unrecognised, always extended the hour of "Absence" call-over.

Boating, in fact, was not formally recognised by the School authorities until 1840, although boys had, by then, been left free from interference on the river for the best part of fifty years.

At Eton, the Captains of the Field and of the Wall are held in estimation, but he who has the greatest veneration of all is the Captain of the Boats.

Cricket, of course, is a very popular game at Eton, and the annual match with Harrow is one of the big events of the year. Some of the Eton grounds have curious names incidentally; among these are Upper Club, Middle Club, Lower Club, Upper Sixpenny, Sixpenny, and there are, or used to be, "Refuse" games for any Fifth Form boy not picked up in regular games.

The cricketers were the first to be allowed exemption from "Six O'clock Absence," when playing in a match in Upper Club,



[Sport and General.

"ABSENCE" IN WESTON'S YARD.

The boys answer their names as called and raise their hats.

and the circumstances in which the "Wet Bobs" secured a similar privilege, and also permission to row at Henley Regatta, are singularly characteristic of Eton traditions.

The terms "Wet Bobs" and "Dry Bobs" require some explanation. Any boy who could pay for a "lock-up" or a "chance" was allowed on the river when he pleased, but to gain this privilege he had first to satisfy a "passing" master by ocular demonstration that he could swim far enough to reach the shore if upset in midstream. As bathing was not permitted in the early weeks of summer term boys who had come to Eton since the end of the previous summer had to remain "Dry Bobs" until opportunity offered for them to pass the swimming test.

In 1870 the last election to scholarships at King's took place, and, apart from the procession of boats to Surly Hall, the usual riotous festivities of Electiontide were abandoned. As a set-off against the forfeited festivities in College the members of the Upper Boats, Captain of the Lower Boats, the Cricket Eleven and several others, numbering about fifty in all, were allowed to attend the Oppidan Dinner at the White Hart Hotel, Windsor, over which the Captain of the Boats presided annually, towards the end of July.

This dinner was neither regulated nor suppressed by the School authorities. Several scandals occurred and, in 1860, H. Blake-Humfrey, prompted Edmund Warre, a master who had just taken on the coaching of the oarsmen, went to the Head Master and offered to give up the Oppidan Dinner if the Eight might be allowed to row at Henley. He agreed, also, to abandon "Check Nights," upon which the three Upper Boats had been accustomed to row up to Surly Hall in their gala dress for the purpose of supping on duck, green peas and champagne, if they might have "boating bills" to excuse them from attending Six O'clock Absence, so that two long boats could row to a point beyond Maidenhead Lock.

To both of these proposals the Head Master gave his consent.

The great days of Eton rowing had commenced, and by 1882 leave from Six O'clock Absence could always be obtained for an Eight if they undertook to row as far as Boulter's Lock, a good afternoon's work.

Dr. Warre, who advised the Captain of the Boats from 1860 until 1884, in which year he became Head Master, and his successors, Mr. S. A. Donaldson and Mr. R. S. de Haviland, taught the boys to manage their own affairs, the old custom of employing professional watermen to row "stroke" was abandoned, and the Captain and his Committee established an authority such as but few schoolboys enjoy. For instance, it is still customary for the Captain, each day, to *invite* the coach to take charge of the Eight.

In many other respects sporting pastimes at Eton enjoy peculiar distinctions.

The first mention of hurdling in athletic history is found in relation to races held at most of the tutors' and dames' houses as long ago as 1837; the "School Mile" was instituted in 1856 and is still run on a measured stretch of high road, instead of on the track, as at other schools; but it was not until 1862 that the Master of the Oppidan pack of beagles, having surplus funds in hand, purchased prizes for jumping, throwing the hammer, and kindred athletic events.

Three years later athletic sports were properly constituted under the auspices of the Captain of the Boats, who, to this day, still appoints the officials and arranges the programme. A state of things which must in itself be unique.

Eton is one of the very few English Schools at which hammer-throwing is still practised; it was aforetime famous for its pole-vaulters and hop, step and jumpers, and may become so again.

It may be added, in connection with the houses just referred to, that until late in the last century, some of the boarding-houses were kept by assistant-masters and the remainder by "dominies" or "dames," and, long after the "dominies" had disappeared, the teachers of mathematics, science and French were accounted "dames," so that the old title still obtained.

A brief mention has been made already of beagling, and Eton has the peculiar distinction of possessing its own pack. Long ago some Collegers combined to establish a small pack in direct contravention of the ancient statutes, and although at one time the total pack consisted of "One long-backed Scotch terrier, whose movements were directed by a Master and two Whips," the boys, in emulation of their elders, decided to adopt a distinctive button. It bore the legend "E.C.H.," standing, of course, for "Eton College Hunt," and it is amusing to remember that the Head Master of that

time, Dr. E. C. Hawtrey, noting this new addition to the costume of some boys, was pleasantly flattered by what he mistook for the wearers' delicately intended compliment to himself, by sporting a button with the Head Master's initials.

None the less, beagling involved going out of bounds and was, for a time, proscribed.

In the year of the Indian Mutiny some Oppidans started a rival pack, which was given official recognition in 1864. Three years later the two packs were amalgamated, The Nugæ Etonenses, written in 1775 or 1776, makes reference to "Scrambling Walls" and "Shirking Walls," as being among the games played by the boys.

The latter was a form of Fives, of which more will be said presently, and "Scrambling Walls" may have been football as played "at the Wall."

There are, of course, two football games played at Eton, one "at the Wall," the other "in the Field." The latter, which is very much like Association, is played by every-



[Sport and General.

THE TIME-HONOURED "WALL" GAME, PLAYED ON ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

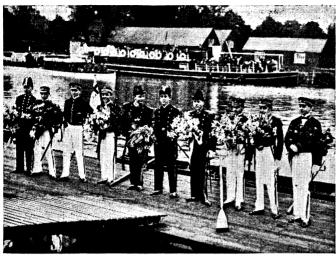
The famous "Wall" game is a peculiar game of football played at the College only during the winter term. A tree at one end of the field acts as the opposition goal, and the boys playing against the wall wear padded headgear to protect themselves. Supporters of both sides sit on the wall to cheer their respective sides to victory.

and in due course the Eton College Hunt uniform of brown-velvet cap and coat and white knickerbockers was evolved, and kennels erected in Agar's Plough. It is interesting to note that the Master's silver horn of office, which is handed down from one generation to another, has been in use since 1864.

Eton has other individual games, one of which, the Wall Game, remains unique, while another, "Eton Fives," has been adopted by various other institutions.

body, and of late years Rugby has been added to the syllabus and Eton has enjoyed some great games with such schools as Bedford and Beaumont.

The origin of this Wall Game, so incomprehensible to those who have never played it, is quite obscure, but it cannot have started earlier than the beginning of the eighteenth century, since the Wall between the Playing Fields and the Slough Road, which is the scene of the St. Andrew's Day struggles, was not built until 1717.



[Sport and General.

A GROUP OF COXSWAINS.

Apparently a great tree, as well as the Wall itself, had something to do with the early days of the game; for, although the arboreal monarch has long since vanished, it is mentioned as a "goal" in books describing Eton life of a century and a quarter ago.

I have made numerous enquiries about this tree, and one Old Etonian, who was at the College from 1882 to 1888, writes:

"I believe there was a tree at the Wall, known as 'bad calx,' which had disappeared before my time. There still is a tree which is used as a goal; the door into the Head Master's garden is used as the other goal."

The names "good" and "bad calx" arose, I think, because in the former the ball cannot be pushed behind owing to the presence of the Head Master's garden wall and, in consequence, any number of "shies" can be obtained; in "bad calx" if the ball is pushed past the line of the tree and there is nothing to stop it the game is re-started from the centre.

The great match of the year takes place on St. Andrew's Day on a narrow strip of ground adjoining the wall of the Slough Road, the teams comprising eleven Collegers and as many selected Oppidans.

In early days the Collegers turned out in knee-breeches and silk stockings, the Oppidans in trousers; but between 1843 and 1851 the sides dressed completely for football and the Collegers, incidentally, found their gowns, at that time still in use, convenient wraps going to and from the Wall.

It was, however, not until 1860 that the

Field Eleven adopted a parti-colour scarlet and Eton blue shirt and a pork-pie cap as their distinctive dress. In the following year the peculiar head-dress was replaced by an ordinary cap, and white flannel trousers with light blue and scarlet stripes were added to the costume. The Wall Eleven preferred a cap and shirt of dark blue and red, in bands

A few years later Houses began to adopt their own distinctive caps and shirts, but the subsequent system of "colours" at Eton is too big a subject to be dealt with in the

space of a single article.

It is a moot point whether Eton can claim the entire credit for having invented the game of Fives. A playwright of the period of Charles the First makes passing reference to "a sport called Fives," while the Patent Roll of William and Mary shows that Thomas Samborne obtained letters patent, protecting his interest for fourteen years in the game, he having claimed in 1692 that he had "invented, contrived, and perfected a certain exercise called Fives, which is moderately expensive and in itself innocent and harmless, and very much conducing to the health and refreshment of such as practise it, the same being never before heretofore publicly practised in England."

The sting of the description lies in its tail, since there is some cause to believe that Mr. Samborne may have founded his game upon that of Shirking Walls, as practised privately at Eton.

"Shirking Walls" is held to be a variety of Fives which owed its distinctive character to the accidental shape of the "court," in which the game was played exclusively up to the year 1848. In the preceding year the hitherto unpretentious game had been accorded official recognition by Dr. Hawtrey, who, at the instigation of Mr. E. H. Pickering and Mr. J. G. Mountain, laid the foundationstone of some new Fives Courts in Trotman's Yard on the Dorney Road, and placed them in bounds on December 4th, 1847.

These new courts were faithfully copied by the builders to combine the peculiarities of the old site between the buttresses of the Collegiate Church, which make up the distinctive features of "Eton Fives."

It is significant of the popularity of the game at Eton between Christmas and Easter, that although there were but the two courts referred to in 1848, by 1910 fifty courts were hardly sufficient for the needs of a thousand-odd Etonians.

Prior to the opening of the Fives Courts in Trotman's Yard it was only possible for Etonians to play their own particular game between the buttresses on the north side of the Chapel in the School Yard. Neither the paved courts nor the steps leading up to the north door of the Chapel were, of course, intended by the royal founder of the College for the purposes for which many generations of Etonians have used them; but, still, the two paved courts afforded good sport to a couple of players apiece, and at the foot of the stairs leading up to the north door of the Chapel, a larger space. although obstructed on the left by the end of a stone balustrade, allowed of four boys playing together, two between the buttresses and the other two behind them on a flat platform at a slightly lower level.

The end of the stone balustrade, above referred to, incidentally, supplies the prototype of the "Pepper-pot," which is still an essential part of an Eton Fives Court all the world over. Two other characteristics of courts designed for the Eton Game is their division into two parts by a "Step," and a small opening between the buttress and the "Step," which is called "The Hole."

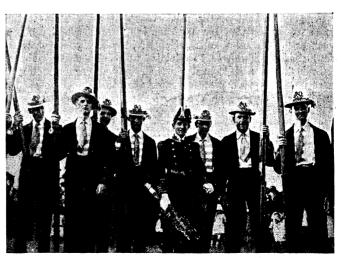
It seems not improbable that the earliest form of Fives, upon which Thomas Samborne may have modelled his "new invention," was the game as originally played by two boys, and that Eton Fives derives from the four-handed game of Shirking Walls, referred to in the Nuqæ Etonenses.

"Shirking" by that same token, is a term which will be very familiar to Old Etonians, for the "Shirking" convention was still in full force a little more than half a century ago. And even after Dr. Hawtrey, in 1847, had placed the new Fives

Courts within bounds, some of the assistant masters still required boys to "shirk," or avoid, them on their way to the newly-legalised spot. The more sensible of the masters, however, took no notice of boys they might meet, technically out of bounds, who were dressed for football or carrying towels which showed their intention of bathing. None the less, Eton High Street did not come within bounds, officially, until 1860.

Early in the nineteenth century the system of bounds was a curious one. Collegers were confined to the School Yard. Weston's Yard and the Playing Fields, and should a boy using the Long Walk in front of Upper School see a master approaching, he was expected to "shirk" him by hiding behind the wall or a tree. The absurdity of bounds in those days is found in the circumstance that most boys had to go outside them in order to reach the rooms of their tutors. There was, it is true, no definite rule that the boys should not make use of the streets of Eton and Windsor, but the master who met one face to face had the power to punish or send him back to College. Likewise, a Sixth Form boy could send back a "Lower Boy," unless he had been given his "Liberties."

To make the position still more anomalous, although the boys were allowed to boat on the Thames or to walk on the Terrace at Windsor, they could neither reach the Boathouse in Brocas Lane nor the Castle without going out of bounds.



[Sport and General.

MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF THE TEN-OARED "MONARCH."

The cox in Admiral's uniform.

Thus arose the system and curious etiquette of "shirking." For instance, any Eton boy seeing a master coming along the street at once dived into the nearest shop and stayed there until he had passed. On the other hand, etiquette forbade the master to turn round, or to seek delinquents, and so he might be safely followed at a sensible distance.

A good tale is told in this connection of a boy caught, flagrante delecto, by a master, in a confectioner's eating an ice-cream, who "shirked" by shutting one eye and holding his spoon up in front of the other.

So far as punishment itself is concerned it may be said that the wholesale system of flogging boys for idleness was almost entirely abolished by Dr. Warre, c. 1884. Under the new system offenders, who would previously have been "put in the bill," were given "white tickets," involving temporary stoppages of all leave, or were put in the "Tardy Book," with equally unpleasant consequences.

A "bill" was a slip of paper, of a special size and shape, used by masters for reporting delinquents. Therefore, to be "put in the bill," in the old days at all events, was tantamount to being booked for a flogging. Thus, the following definition occurs in one of the Eton magazines: "Bill, a trifling thin slip of paper with names doomed to flagellation inscribed thereon; each line as bad as a lawyer's items; being a 'bill of exchange' of birch for idleness; the terror of lower boys and the laughing stock of sixth form prepostors."

A story is told of the misfortunes of a batch of candidates for confirmation, who went up to the terrible John Keate (c. 1809), and, not being allowed to explain, were all soundly "swished" because their names were inscribed on a piece of paper identical in size and shape with the usual execution "bill."

An Etonian of fifty years ago referred to a flogging he had received as a "swishing," and it was quite common, after the operation, for the victim to obtain the remnants of the birch, decorate it with blue ribbon and hang it in his room as an ornament.

The practical abolition of the birch in the middle 'eighties was not altogether popular with most of the boys, who regarded "lines" and "extra pupil room" as much more unpleasant forms of punishment.

"Bever" will be a term remembered by perhaps a few very elderly Old Etonians. It is a relic of the distant days when the hours of work were considerably relaxed after the Feast of St. John, in May, and the boys were allowed a *siesta* in the schoolroom after dinner and only awakened for "Bever" at three o'clock.

This "Bever" consisted of bread and beer, and was supplied to the Collegers and their friends daily at 3 p.m. during the summer months. The custom survived at Eton until June, 1890.

Another interesting old custom was that of "sending up verses for play." It originated with the granting by the Provost to the School of a half-holiday on Thursdays, at the request of a sixth form boy who had prepared a specially good exercise. The boy who was thus, himself, "sent up for play" was let off eleven o'clock school on Thursday morning to write out on giltedged paper the exercise he was to present to the Provost for the purpose of obtaining the half-holiday.

It is interesting to note that these exercises are preserved in the College Library and that from them the three series of the Musæ

Etonenses are mainly compiled.

Among the many things ordained by the old statutes of Henry VI is one providing that, on the day appointed, two Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, shall go to Eton "with not more than ten horses" for the election of "a number of Scholars larger than that of the actual vacancies at King's, from among the Eton Scholars, disregarding the instances, prayers or requests of kings, queens, princes, prelates, noblemen or others."

This statute further enacts that "The first Scholar on the indenture shall always go into residence at King's within twenty days of the receipt of the summons announcing a vacancy there."

Scholars for Eton were similarly elected and each received, yearly, a gown and hood (twenty-four yards of cloth, costing fifty shillings). The Scholars and Choristers were supplied also with clothing and bedding. On reaching the age of fifteen each boy was required to swear, *inter alia*, that he possessed not more than five marks a year and would not reveal the secrets of the College.

The Commensals, according to the old statutes, were to be the sons of noblemen and of special friends of the College up to the number of twenty, and were to be allowed to sleep and board in College.

Under the new statutes the King's Scholars, or Collegers, number at least seventy, about a dozen vacancies occurring

each year. Boys are not eligible for election who have not reached their twelfth or who have passed their fourteenth birthday on 1st June preceding the election.

Foundation Scholars are educated and lodged in College at the expense of the

College.

Other boys, known as Oppidans, are admitted between the ages of twelve and fourteen years upon passing the entrance examination which determines their place in the school.

The Oppidans may live with their parents or guardians; or may, if special permission is obtained, live with other persons; otherwise they are lodged and boarded in Masters' Houses.

dorum "for yll-kept hedys, unwasshed facys, fowle clothis and sich other."

In those days the Usher entered the schoolroom at 6 a.m. and, kneeling down, said Prayers; afterwards, while he was teaching the Lower Forms, the ordinary præpostors made out their lists of latecomers, but the *Præpostor Immundorum* made careful inspection of the faces and hands of his schoolfellows!

Contrary to the usual interpretation of the term, as being synonymous of a responsible person, the "custos" at Eton in the sixteenth century was the dunce.

This article may fitly be closed by stating that the vastly improved state of athletics in England owes much to Eton, for the boys



FINAL OF THE "LOWER BOY" FOOTBALL CUP.

[Sport and General.

At Eton the boys set in authority over their fellows are called Præpostors, corresponding to the prefects and monitors at other schools.

The name has survived from the foundation of Eton in 1440 right up to the present day, although the qualifications of prepostors and their duties have changed considerably.

Nowadays, the præpostor, monitor or prefect holds much the same office in every school, but in the days when Eton was beginning four præpostors had charge of the Long Chamber, four held sway "in the field, when they play, for fyghtyng, rent clothis, blew eyes, or sich like," and there was one in Hall, also a Præpostor Immun-

have given keen support to the Public Schools Challenge Cups Meeting. Nine individual victories have been achieved, and in 1917 Harrow defeated Eton by the barest margin for the All-Round Challenge Cup which is awarded to the school scoring the greatest number of points. In that year W. G. Tatham won the half and one mile races, while I. J. Pitman, not then sixteen, took the Open Steeplechase, and the Junior 100 yards, 250 yards, and High Jump. In 1923 C. F. N. Harrison set the Public Schools 100 yards record at $10\frac{2}{5}$ secs., but Eton's most famous athlete son is Lord Burghley, English and Olympic Hurdles Champion and formerly world's record-holder.



TO A FELLOW-POET

By GRACE NOLL CROWELL

YOU have used such simple words In these brittle lines, But the poem you have made Lives and sings and shines.

Simple words a child can read, Words he understands, Small drab words—yet they become Diamonds in your hands. Common words a careless tongue Uses every day, Yet you make them take my sight And my breath away.

FREDERICK DELIUS, CH. Himself and His Music

Watson Lyle

NOTION was current among mid-Victorians, I believe, that it was good for the young idea to be "up against it," as the expressive slang of our own days has it. The genius of the gifted child was sentimentally supposed to thrive under the slings and arrows of misfortune, naturally or artificially loaded. Fallacious, of course; but typical of an age that made a habit of ignoring the indisputable existence of many things, including the legs of more than half of the human race when they outgrew baby frocks. It may be that some such views influenced Delius père when his second son Frederick (born in Bradford on the 26th January, 1863) unmistakably voiced his preference for the career of a musician. The father's persistent opposition may simply have been intended to prune the son's gift into a sturdy growth; or it may be that, true to the industrious teachings of his Dutch parentage, he actually did look upon the profession of music as too risky, financially, in which view he was undoubtedly right. Like many people in comfortable circumstances then, having a natural bent for music, and some talent as an amateur, he was perfectly ready to patronise (horrid but apposite word!) its most notable followers, while utterly refusing to sanction the intimate association of his own kith and kin with it. The odd opinion that music, like the stage, was scarcely a "nice" profession continued to much later times, and, all considered, the attitude of the composer's father is not incomprehensible, however much it is to be deplored. In frustrating his son he quite likely delayed by a decade the fruition of

Delius's gifts. When we remember that a long and wearing illness, with blindness, now almost total, at the comparatively early age of sixty-six, has prevented Delius from the free exercise of his creative art, these initial set-backs seem particularly hard. Yet such is the spirit of this man, with the urge of his music still welling up in his innermost self, that although physically unable to write or see, he refuses to hang up his lute, and with the aid of a clever young French musician as amanuensis he is trying to continue his work.

Between these difficult later days and the thwarting early years of his career, there have been many rough places, many minor frustrations. Critics are now generally agreed upon the marked individuality of his music, whether they praise or damn it. His difficulties may have helped towards the assertion of self in his music, and thus, to a limited extent, the Victorian idea appears to function, but only to a limited extent, because penury in a garret, regarded as an indispensable forcing-house condition for genius, has never touched Delius. Schubert alone of the big composers ever knew the lack of adequate means to satisfy simple. material wants, but, like all of these, Delius has reacted to the emotional and spiritual things of life, as well as to its everyday happenings, in the supersensitive, poetic fashion of a latter-day Chopin. The piano proved to be Chopin's most congenial means of expression, whereas Delius is at his finest in his orchestral music. One freely admits this analogy to be unsatisfactory, but it conveys readily a good idea of the essential spiritual quality, of the poetic vision (or

rather, hearing) to be found in the music of both composers.

It is easy to understand the deep impression made upon Delius the first time he heard any of Chopin's music. He was then about ten years old, and although reared in a home where music occupied a prominent place in family life, all he knew of the music of the masters was some Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. He liked them, but was not greatly stirred by them. One day a visitor played the posthumous Waltz in E Minor by Chopin, which spoke to him in a new and wonderful language of sound. He could already play both the violin and the piano, and was accustomed to extemporise music

herself absorbing the forbidden fruit with much avidity! She had a weakness for relating everyday incidents with picturesque embroideries of her own invention, and, while she was not definitely musical, like her husband, it is evident that their son inherits his imaginative powers from her. Perhaps the consumption of the exciting "literature" caused the boy and his brother to set off early one morning tramping across Ilkley Moor, out into the wide, wide world in search of adventure. Luckily they were seen and were sent home in safe keeping by a friend of the family.

Years later the wander-lust broke out anew upon the completion of his education

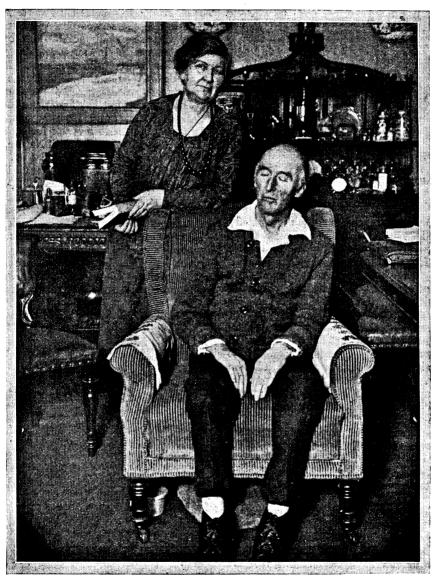


[Gordon Bryan.

THE HOUSE AND GARDEN OF DELIUS AT GREZ-SUR-LOING, NEAR PARIS.

on the latter at the request of his mother in order to entertain friends, but at the magic voice of Chopin other musical experiences receded into insignificance. The waltz was played through again, and then the listening child sat down at the instrument himself and played it through from memory. The feat was a truly remarkable one for a small boy, though musically gifted, for the waltz is of course by no means the shortest or the simplest Chopin wrote. A few years before this incident his secret and insatiable appetite for penny "bloods" was discovered by his mother, and quelled, apparently more from a conventional sense of duty than from personal conviction, for she was later found

at Bradford Grammar School, and then at Isleworth, where he made a dutiful attempt to begin the unromantic career mapped out for him in his father's wool-importing business at Bradford. This environment, arid of intellectual and artistic interest, was æsthetically bettered within a few months by an appointment as volontaire arranged with a firm at Chemnitz, in Saxony. There orchestral concerts, opera, and the drama every week urged on his development as an artist, and made correspondingly distasteful the prospect of the life planned for him. Parental sway in the eighties was a powerful factor in the affairs of youth, but although his father placed a veto upon music as a profession, there had been little interruption in his study of the violin, first begun at the age of six under Bauerkeller of the Hallé Orchestra, and continued at Chemnitz with Hans Sitt, a pedagogue of some reputation. abroad again on business in June, 1881, to Gothenburg. Sweden proved very congenial, especially Stockholm. Its social and artistic advantages and lovely surroundings were as a beautiful vision to him after the



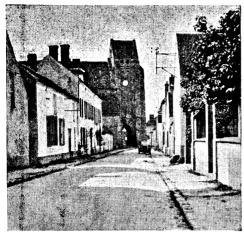
[Pacific and Atlantic.

THE COMPOSER AND HIS WIFE AT HOME.

Eventually Sitt joined the teaching staff at the Leipzig Conservatoire, where, as events shaped themselves, Delius resumed studies with him in later years.

However, before this happened, the young musician went home for a spell, only to go

drab atmosphere of Bradford. Here was life indeed, variety alike in the natural and human surroundings, and the clash and interchange of views stimulating to the creative intellect. Delius began to awake to a realisation of himself, to clamour for



[Gordon Bryan.

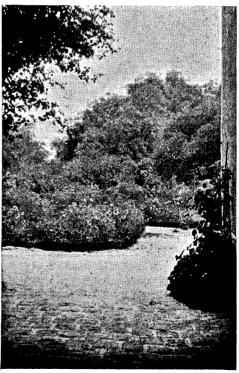
MAIN STREET OF GREZ-SUR-LOING.
DELIUS'S HOUSE IS ON THE LEFT.

the complete independence of action blindly sensed in that flight of childhood across the moors, and again insistently calling to him in the free rhythmic interplay of the Chopin The young man of nearly nineteen became impatient of the visionary impulses and half-formed resolves of adolescence. He felt that music was for him, and he for His declaration of this conviction brought about a storm of family dissensions, and more resistance from his father. However, since his failure as a business man seemed to be a foregone conclusion, a kind of compromise was hit upon, the upshot being his emigration in 1884 to Florida as an orange-planter.

The decision proved momentous. Through it he was brought into the intimate communion with Nature which to this day remains an unfailing solace in his physical trials, and the spirit of which permeates his mature art, giving to his music a oneness with Nature, a veritable poetic essence of life out of doors; by which I mean that feeling of pulsating, invisible life which one gets when alone in the quietude of a spacious garden or forest, rather than the actual sounds of birds, insects, or beasts, common to such places. Phases of Nature are often reflected in music, as we know; but the connection seems more intimate than a mere reflection in the music of Delius. In a more directly practical way the Florida experience bore importantly upon his growth as a composer. Incidentally it brought him into touch with another musician who gave him a sound grounding in the technical needs of his art.

Arriving at New York from Liverpool, he completed his journey by steamboat down the coast to Fernandina. Orange-groves in Florida in those days were, in the amenities of civilised life (which simply didn't exist!), very different from those of to-day. The plantation to which Delius was sent, and which in due course was purchased and set going with negro labour for him by his father, was rich in swamps, dangerous reptiles, and other wild creatures. At his journey's end he found himself the sole occupant of a wooden house overlooking the St. John river. For the first three months he dwelt there, away from human companionship, and thrown back for company upon the creatures and forces of Nature, with time, and to spare, for contemplation. effect of such isolation would have told upon even a matter-of-fact individual. pression upon the taut and highly-sensitive personality of Delius proved to be crucial. He came of age spiritually as well as legally.

But contemplation and inactivity are antagonistic to commercial enterprise, however helpful otherwise, and so, when business arrangements were carried through, the young man made a final effort to fall in with



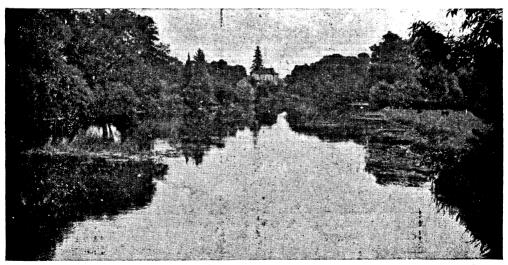
[Gordon Bryan.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GARDEN.

his father's plans, and to settle down to the life of an orange-grower. The day's round included a good deal of hunting. He became something of an adept at alligator shooting. During one such expedition he had a narrow escape from death by a bite from a rattlesnake. His negro servant noticed the reptile just as Delius was about to step upon it, and stopped his master in the nick of time.

These were no more than diversions. Music still demanded an outlet. The craving sent him to Jacksonville in search of a While he tried over an instrument in a shop there it happened that he was overheard playing (and in his musically-starved state one can imagine with what ardour he played!) by T. F. Ward, organist at the Jesuit Church of SS. Peter and Paul at Brooklyn. Inquiry from the shopkeeper resulted in an introduction, and a feeling of mutual attraction and friendship. At the end of Delius's stay in the town the two returned together, plus the piano, to the lonely habitation in the plantation. followed a period of eager and intensive study under the guidance of his new friend. With an educated musician at his elbow, Delius the composer went on apace, while Delius the orange-planter found the thrills of alligator shooting and rattlesnake adventure distinctly on the wane. By a further lucky circumstance his brother unexpectedly turned up at the plantation in August, 1885, and was soon persuaded to shoulder the responsibility of it, thus freeing the budding composer for a return to civilisation, with the promise it held out of going back to European musical centres for further study, and at last to gain his desire. To be free from dependence for money upon his father, he sang in the choir of the synagogue at Jacksonville and subsequently taught there and at Danville, Virginia; and he also fulfilled engagements as violinist. His plunge into professional life enabled him to save enough money to go to Europe, and establish himself in a modest lodging in Leipzig, taking up his violin studies again with Hans Sitt at the Conservatoire.

In the summer of 1887 a walking tour in Southern Norway gave him a working knowledge of the language which, upon his return to Germany, brought him into touch with some prominent Norwegian musicians. Among them were Grieg and Christian Sinding, with both of whom he became intimate. Early in the days of his friendship with Grieg (which was only terminated by the death of the gentle Norwegian twenty years afterwards) that composer used the weight of his reputation with Delius's father in 1888, at a critical time, to prevent the sudden termination of the attenuated money allowance made to his son. The continuance of the allowance, with the practical sympathy of an uncle, made it possible for Delius to go on with his studies. He lived simply in Paris for a further six years, during which he produced three operas, a string quartet, two



[Gordon Bryan

works for orchestra, a sonata for violin and pianoforte, and many songs. He worked hard, his spare time, such as it was, being given to friendships with writers and painters, rather than to the society of his fellow-musicians. Among the painters he knew were Paul Gauguin and Jelka Rosen. The latter, he married. Of the writers now known to fame there was Strindberg, fond of walks, and often erratic in those Parisian student days. It is in the nature of Delius to dislike as strongly as he can like, and as Strindberg was a man of violent moods it is fortunate that there was attraction rather

tween the two. For Paris Delius an unusual affection-in 1899 he wrote his expressive Nocturne for Orchestra, "Paris; the Song of a Great City' -and to-day it is just outside Paris, at Grez-sur-Loing, that he has made home, in a quiet place, with a delightful garden in the world, yet scarcely of it, though within hail of Paris, and of London. To him, as to many invalids, wireless is a joy. The broadcast from 2 LO last winter of a concert devoted to his compositions, and con-

than repulsion be-

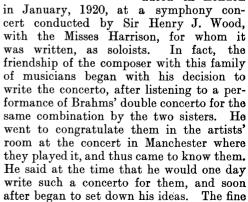
ducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, made him happy, as in a different way did the recognition of his service to art, by the King, making him a Companion of Honour.

As has been said, Nature remains his solace. Whenever the weather permits (and that is often day after day in summer) he sits in his garden, still sensitively aware of the unseen birds, and insects, and flowers fulfilling their destinies in the secluded world around him. There is the river, too, the river on which he loves to be taken, and of which he has composed an impression in terms of his art in "Summer Night on the River" (1911). At times, recently, it has

been possible for him to distinguish the blurred outlines of large objects close to him. Perhaps Nature is slowly working some cure, for his sight at least, unknown to science.

The music of Delius owes much of its unusual colour qualities (in a purely technical sense), and of its aloofness from the styles of his contemporaries, to the infinite trouble he is at to work directly from the principal instrumental colours (the tone qualities of the instruments) while he is actually writing a composition. For example, when he was at work on his double concerto for 'cello, violin,' and orchestra (composed in 1915–16),

he spent much time in the London studio of the Misses May and Beatrice Harrison, making the alterations demanded by his fine sense of hearing in the passages for the solo instruments if, when played him by the artists. tone - colour proved unsatisfactory. When he thought necessary he would re-score parts again and again to obtain just the fineness demanded by his conception, like a painter absorbed in capturing upon his canvas the warm glow of life beneath the skin of his model. This concerto was produced in London





PORTRAIT OF THE COMPOSER TAKEN IN 1901.

Reproduced by courtesy of Universal Edition, Vienna.

sonata for 'cello and pianoforte written in 1917 for Miss Beatrice Harrison was produced by her in November of the following year at a recital in Wigmore Hall. The last work of importance to be written before blindness overtook him, the concerto for 'cello and orchestra, dates from 1921, and was written for and produced by Miss Harrison in Vienna in the same year. Its delicate tonal beauty seems charged with an undefinable sadness. While engaged upon this work he sank into one of his characteristic moods of absorption when composing, remaining in concentrated thought for some six hours, despite the efforts of Mrs. Delius to remind him of everyday affairs.

The music of Delius does not make for easy listening, although rich in qualities of melody, and rhythm. In this respect it is like most music of permanent value, which can seldom be more than sensed at a first hearing, and which goes on improving and strengthening one's allegiance, like a good friend, at each fresh meeting. In his orchestral scores particularly the style of writing is mainly contrapuntal, which, of itself, does not make for easy assimilation compared with the more usual constructive method in which a melody, supported by a more or less tum-tum accompaniment (that really makes no demands upon the listener's musical ear), exerts a direct appeal. But to Delius's music one may listen again and again, sure of finding fresh beauties simply because there are several voices singing, each it's own song, or its own version of the central musical speech, that is the principal theme or melody.

Listen, for example, to the delightful poem, "On Hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring" (1912), with its motif of the familiar bird-call and its undercurrent of echoing voices, expressing the emotions stirred by the note of spring. Redolent, too, of the open air (as is so much of his music) is "A Song of the High Hills," for choir and orchestra (1911-12), produced by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1920. A much earlier work originally produced by the Society is the fantasy for orchestra, "In a Summer Garden," written in 1908, but revised in 1913. Revision is not uncommon with Delius's bigger works, the pianoforte concerto (1906) being another of his frequently performed works that was partially re-written by the composer. The "Appalachia Variations" for orchestra and choir (1902) are in the

repertoire of the bigger orchestras, and so is the music-or some of it-from his most important work for the stage, the opera "A Village Romeo and Juliet" (1900-1). English Rhapsody for orchestra, "Brigg Fair" (1907), a delightful tone-picture of the countryside, is not only frequently heard at concerts but is among his recorded works, and the better-known of his two Dance Rhapsodies for orchestra, that written in 1908, is often included in programmes of representative British music. Less familiar, among his bigger works, are his "Requiem" (1914-16), his String Quartet (No. 2) (1916-17) and the ballad for orchestra, "Eventyr" ("Once upon a time"), and his fine concerto for violin and orchestra (1916), which was given its London début by the Philharmonic with Albert Sammons as soloist. Nachtlied "Zarathustra" (1898), for baritone and orchestra, was afterwards incorporated in "A Mass of Life," dating 1904-5, a work that in its bigness of conception stands away from other compositions. Delius's name is probably best remembered by the theatre-going public as the writer of the vivid music for the production at His Majesty's Theatre in 1920 of Flecker's "Hassan; or, the Golden Journey to Samarkand." Altogether he has written, so far, over a hundred works, some of them as large if not so well known as those mentioned. some of them only songs, slight but characteristic of his individuality as a musician with an unusually sensitive gift for the creation of tone-colour.

At the Delius Festival in Queen's and Æolian Halls, London, during the latter part of October and the beginning of November, arrangements have been made to give a representative selection of his compositions, under the conductorship of Sir Thomas Beecham. The concert on October 24th is under the ægis of the Royal Philharmonic Society, while on November 1st there will be a complete performance of "A Mass of Life," with the Philharmonic Choir, and Miriam Licette, Astra Desmond. Tudor Davies, and Roy Henderson as soloists, the concert itself forming the second of the B.B.C. Symphony Concerts, season 1929-30. By this co-ordination of effort and influence the musical public of the composer's native land unites in expressing its admiration of his worth as an artist. is a distinction rare in the history of music. and still rarer in the history of British music. to be accorded to a living composer.

THE SILVER CROSS

By H. C. BAILEY

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

ITH the simple purpose of asking him to dinner, Mr. Fortune strolled into the room of the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Depart-

He was received with enthusiasm. very man!" Lomas chuckled. "Now we'll tell you all about it, Superintendent. is Mr. Fortune. Sit down, Reginald.

mentous case for you."

Mr. Fortune moaned gently. Mr. Fortune blinked at him and saw also a solemn, fattish man. "Superintendent Billson of Downshire," Lomas explained. "Now, Reginald, what's that?" Lomas held out to him a little flat piece of grey metal. It was in the shape of a cross, but the arms curved down at the ends. It was marked with a faint irregular pattern.

Reggie studied it. "Well, it's silver. It was made as a bit of jewellery. Probably a charm also. Possibly charged with magic. By South American Indians. Pretty far

south, I should say."

Billson listened with his mouth open. Billson slapped his thigh. "That's good enough!" he cried. "That's got him, eh, Mr. Lomas?"

"I should say so. Very neat little clue,

Reggie blinked at them again. "Yes. Now tell me what I've done," he said

plaintively.

"You see, Reginald," Lomas smiled. "Billson has a bit of a case against a parson, but he didn't want to make a charge unless he was sure of a conviction. So he came to consult us about the evidence.'

"There's more than that, sir." Billson was not pleased. "The parson in the case is a queer fish. He's never got on with the other clergy or the country people or anybody but a few what you might call devotees. You see, if we put up a case against a man like that, without we can prove it absolutely, it looks as if we were trying to down him because he set the big

folks' backs up. We'd be making a martyr and fall down over it, and that sort o' thing gets the police a bad name. That's how the chief constable looks at it, so he said to come and ask you gentlemen at Scotland Yard about this trinket. Now you've recognised it. That'll settle the Reverend Neath."

"What's the charge?"

Lomas laughed. "Oh, very grave, Reginald. Theft. Matter of twenty pounds." "Twenty-five, sir," said Billson severely.
"It was like this, Mr. Fortune. The Rever-

end Neath came into our country five years ago. He was what you might call an odd job parson, taking duty when men went sick, doing a bit of mission work. He'd been a missionary—in South America, do you see?" Billson winked. "It was given out his health broke down out there, but some says he quarrelled with the missionary society. Anyway, there he was in Downshire looking for what he could get. After a bit he got made Vicar of Fotton. That was the Bishop. Not much catch, believe me. Sort of place nobody will take. Big parish, big church, tumble-down house and just enough to starve on. So there he's been in Fotton getting into trouble all round,

same as he always did."

"Yes. How is that?" Reggie murmured.
"Every way there is. He's one of those haughty parsons. He's a holy saint and anyone else is a simple worm—that kind of thing. Our Downshire people won't stand for it. And it don't come particular well from the Reverend Neath. He's up to his neck in debt. I don't want to be too hard on him. He hasn't got a decent living in Fotton. Still, you can't say it's right for a parson to bilk all the tradesmen. That don't get him liked. Then, he's always asking people for money, in the parish and out of it. Begging letters all over the county. Only not what you'd call begging-demand notes, the chief constable says. The other day Mr. Neath goes up to the big house in the parish—that's Fotton Hall; Sir Ernest Smart has it now. New man, made his money in London, drapery or something. Well, of course, him being the squire of the place, the Rev. Neath's quarrelled with him. He don't know why Mr. Neath came up to the Hall—he didn't put himself out to see the fellow—and being kept waiting a bit, Mr. Neath went off saying nothing to nobody. It was Saturday. the men about the place that don't live in, gardeners and farm hands and such, get paid weekly. Sir Ernest had the money ready in the room he uses as his office, just on the desk. When he came in to pay, he found he was twenty-five pounds short three fivers, the rest currency notes. sent for the police. I found the only stranger who'd been about the place was the Rev. Neath, and he'd been left to himself in a room just by the office an hour or more. And searching the office I came on that little cross. I thought it was a religious thing, such as a parson might have. it isn't ordinary, so the chief constable told me to try it on you gentlemen at Scotland Yard. Lord, you made me jump when you said South American, Mr. Fortune. That gets him fair and square. I reckon there's not another man in Downshire would have a bit o' South American jewellery on him."

"No, no. It isn't likely," Reggie murmured. "I wonder."

"Eh?" Billson's mouth came open.
"What do you mean, wonder? You said
yourself nobody but him would have such
a thing."

"Yes, yes. That's one of the fishy points about it. It makes the case too easy."

"I don't follow you," Billson grumbled.

"Oh, sorry. Oh, the other fishy point is that it makes the case too difficult."

Lomas chuckled. But Billson grew red. "Look here, sir, I don't know what you mean. I hope you're not playing the fool with me."

"My dear fellow! Oh, my dear fellow!" Reggie purred. "I'm wholly serious. Think! If you believe the parson dropped it in the office, that links him up with the theft of the money nice and neat. But if you do believe he dropped it, you have to believe a man who looked into an empty office, picked up some money and went off with it, managed to drop a special kind of trinket on the spot. That's very difficult. Why should he drop anything? He wouldn't turn out his pockets. There wasn't any

struggle. Why should he drop just the thing which would point to him? Too difficult, Superintendent."

Lomas put up his eyeglass and surveyed Reggie. "I don't know, sir," Billson pondered. "It is queer, to be sure. But that's how chaps get caught. They make some silly blunder."

"Oh, yes. Yes. I think there's been an error of judgment. But I don't see my way. If the parson dropped this in the office, I can't imagine how he did it."

Billson meditated laboriously. "But then, if he didn't drop it, how did it get there?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," Reggie murmured. "Very interesting case, Superintendent. But I don't think you'd better rely on this pretty little thing." Reluctantly he gave back the silver cross. "If you get any more evidence, let me know. Anything I can do, well, I'd like to."

"Thank you, sir. I'll tell the chief constable." Billson was properly impressed. And they got rid of him.

Then Lomas said, "What's the attraction, Reginald? Paltry business, isn't it?"

Reginald? Paltry business, isn't it?"
"It could be," Reggie sighed. "How
does it strike the higher intelligence,
Lomas?"

"Two possibilities, of course. Either the parson did take the money, or some of his many enemies are trying to get him into trouble. Take the thing one way—the poor devil's gone deeper and deeper into debt till he was driven to steal. Take it the other way—he's run up at last against somebody spiteful who didn't stick at a trifle to pay him out."

"Yes, yes. Very lucid. Very reasonable," Reggie sighed. "And probably with elements of truth. But it might be more

than spite, Lomas."

"Oh, certainly. It might be a plot to kill the King. Yet I remain calm. My dear fellow, you're a wonder at seeing through brick walls—but a little fond of seeing what isn't there."

"I don't." Reggie was indignant. "I don't see anything. I keep saying so. That's what bothers me." He stood up. He looked down at Lomas with disgust: "Sometimes I hate you," he murmured. "Well, well. Oh—you're not worth it, but Joan told me to ask you to dinner on Wednesday."

" Delighted."

"I'm not," said Reggie. "Good-bye."

But that dinner went merrily. Not till Lomas was going, last of the guests, did he have a word with Reggie alone. "By the way, Reginald-you'll be glad to hear the Downshire case is cleared up. They've traced some of the stolen notes to the parson."

"Yes, I know. Billson 'phoned me. I

thought they would."

"Good Gad!" Lomas chuckled. "Splendid. Never admit an error, Reginald."

"When I make one, I do," said Reggie.
"I'm not an official, Lomas. I only struggle to keep 'em straight. I'm going down.'

The morning saw him arrive at the office of the chief constable in Avonbury. Chief constables are a species which he does not love, but Colonel Tresham was neither military nor official: in manner like a nice big dog, in mind simply human as Superintendent Billson. "Very kind of you to come down, Mr. Fortune. It's a distressing case to me. This poor fellow-well, whatever he's done he's had a hard life of it. And a clergyman too! Any sort of charge is ruin. Billson tells me you didn't expect we should get evidence to prove him guilty."

"I didn't say that. No, I thought you would. I said wait till you've got it.

"I see. Well, we have got it now, I'm afraid. There seems to be no loophole. Very painful affair. I have it from the Bishop himself he thought Neath's character quite blameless."

"Oh, Mr. Neath has friends, has he?" "I couldn't say friends. Neath's a most difficult fellow. The Bishop owns that. Always would go his own way. Never listened to reason. Thought everybody a miserable sinner. A sort of saintly tyrant. That's the best the clergy themselves can say of him. What can I do? The Bishop admitted to me if there is evidence the case ought to be tried."

'Yes, yes, you'll have to go through with it-if the man who lost the money

means to prosecute."

The chief constable shook his head. "There's no doubt about that. Smart will prosecute. I can't say I blame him. Nobody would want Neath for the parson of his parish."
"But Sir Ernest Smart is specially

"I don't The chief constable meditated. know if that's fair, Mr. Fortune. I'm bound to say he's been quite correct all through. Ah, here's Billson; I sent him over to Fotton to fetch the parson. It seemed to me we ought to give him a chance to explain himself."

"Oh, yes, rather, let's have him talk."

A dark haggard face, a gleam of fierce That was the first notion Reggie had of Mr. Neath. Whatever was the truth of the man, plainly he believed himself a fighter of forlorn hopes, a fighter back to the wall. For the rest a queer fellow. He had a mat of iron-grey hair, short and tousled. He was lean and ungainly, all arms and legs. His clerical black was shabby, shiny, stained, white on the seams, frayed at wrist and heel.

"Please sit down, Mr. Neath," said

Colonel Tresham.

Mr. Neath waved the courtesy off with a grimed, rough hand. "I stand to answer to you, chief constable," he said solemnly. And Reggie's eyelids drooped. He does not like acting off the stage.

The chief constable was also uncomfortable. "As you please, sir. I have to put some facts before you and ask you to explain

them."

"I render unto Cæsar the things which

are Cæsar's. I obey the law."

"Er—quite so. That's right. I only want you to do yourself justice. This is a very serious matter. On the morning of Saturday the 15th a sum of money was stolen from Sir Ernest Smart: three fivepound notes and ten pounds besides taken from his office at Fotton Hall."

"If this is true, I am sorry for the thief. I am glad that the loss falls on one who can

bear it."

"You were at Fotton Hall that morning, Mr. Neath."

"That is certainly true. I went to ask alms of the knight for my poor. He received me not and I came empty away."

"Did you go into the office?"

"I do not know what room the knight calls his office. I sat awhile in an outer chamber till it was clear he meant an insolence, then I left his house."

"We have the numbers of the five-pound notes which were stolen. This week you paid two tradesmen in Avonbury, Smith the butcher and Grey the tailor, and you paid with stolen notes. Can you explain that, Mr. Neath?"

Neath quivered, raised his hand, took a step forward. Then his hand fell. "God forgive you," he said. "You know not what you do. Thus I answer you, chief constable. If what you say is true, I know nothing how it has come to pass. These moneys which I paid came to me as a free gift from some unknown hand. I received them in an envelope which was delivered by the postman."

"Oh, just the notes?" Reggie opened

his eyes. "No letter?"

"Sir, there was no word of writing. Only a scrap cut from a newspaper wherein it was reported that Smith the butcher sued me for a debt. Thus I was assured the money came from some kind hand to the relief of my necessities."

"Have you kept the envelope?" said

Reggie.

"The envelope? I know nothing of it.

It is gone."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Neath, very sorry." Colonel Tresham shook his head. "I hoped you would be able to explain. I am bound to tell you this is quite unsatisfactory. You must expect Sir Ernest Smart will prosecute you for theft. I ought to detain you. But if you'll give your word to remain at Fotton, I'll do nothing more till I have consulted him."

"Do your duty. I ask nothing else," said Neath. "I shall not shun the charge nor avoid it. God's will be done." He went

out.

"What's to be done with a man who takes things like that?" Colonel Tresham groaned. "He makes you feel you can't

believe a word he says."

"I know. Very improbable invention." Colonel Tresham thought it over painfully. "Just one thing does occur to me, Mr. Fortune. Suppose Neath didn't take the money himself: suppose it was given him by somebody and he only found out afterwards it was stolen. Then I suppose he would rather go to prison himself than betray the thief."

"He might, yes," Reggie smiled. "Sounds like the plot of a good old melodrama, doesn't it? And he is rather like

that, our heroic parson."

"I know it sounds silly." The Colonel shook his head. "After all, any way you take it, there's been some very silly work done. Think of Neath paying bills here on the spot with the bank-notes. Crazy!"

"Yes. Assuming Neath knew they were stolen, it was crazy. But if he didn't know, it was merely natural. And he didn't strike me as a crazy fellow. I should say he has quite a sound brain."

The Colonel was startled. "Well, I'm glad to hear you say so. I feel as if I was persecuting a poor fellow not responsible for

his actions."

"The play-acting touch? Yes. He sees

himself as a sort of saint and prophet. I should say he is. Awkward fellow to live with. But not crazy. Saints aren't. Highly sane."

The Colonel struggled with this shocking idea. "Well, maybe. But I don't seem to understand what you really think about

the case, Mr. Fortune?"

"No, no. Nordo I. Nothing very definite. Let's go and see Sir Ernest Smart."

"I shall have to see the fellow, of course,"

the Colonel grumbled.

"You don't love him, do you?" Reggie smiled. "I wonder. By the way, let's take that silver cross."

Fotton Hall is a spacious Georgian house. The room into which they were taken after a moment of waiting was small and bare, with desks and ledgers and a small plump man. "Oh, is this the scene of the crime?" Reggie beamed at him.

"Mr. Fortune, Smart," said Colonel

Tresham.

"Ah, I know. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Fortune. Come to look into this business of mine, eh? Well, I hope you make the Colonel get a move on. What about it, Tresham? You are taking your time, aren't you? I was talking about it to Westow yesterday and he said just the same. 'Tresham's taking his time,' he said."

"Deuced good of him," the Colonel

exploded.

"And who is Westow?" Reggie purred.
"Lord Westow, sir. Lord Westow of Compton."

"Oh, yes. And Lord Westow takes an

interest in the case?"

"Interest? I don't know. He's one of the leading men in the county, sir. He's a friend of mine. Naturally he's interested."

"I don't need anyone to teach me my duty, Smart," Colonel Tresham growled. "You asked the police to investigate a case of theft. That's been done. Your five-pound notes were paid by Mr. Neath to his tradesmen in Avonbury. His explanation is that he received them by post in an envelope with a cutting from a newspaper about his being sued for debt. He says that he doesn't know where they came from."

"I dare say," the little man sneered.

"Don't believe that, do you?"

The Colonel frowned at him. "If you want my opinion, I think it's a painful case. The question for you is whether you want to prosecute: whether you want to have all the poor fellow's story threshed out in court."

"What do you mean? Do you think I'm afraid of him? Of course I'm going to prosecute. The fellow's a common thief—with his high and mighty airs about being a priest! He makes me sick. I always thought he was a holy sham. Now I've caught him, I'll show him up. Bet you what you like he's convicted. I know what goes with a jury. It's not the first time I've sent a sneak thief to prison. When I was in business—""

"I don't want to hear about the shop, thanks." Colonel Tresham turned away. "Good morning."

"One moment," Reggie murmured. "That silver cross, Colonel." He held out his hand. "This was found on the scene of the crime, Sir Ernest. What about it?"

"I don't know anything about it. Billson showed it me. I never saw the thing in my life before. Anybody might have dropped it."

"You think so?" Reggie contemplated the little man with dreamy wonder.

A girl came violently into the room.

She was very much his daughter, small, plump and fierce. "Colonel Tresham! You've come about Mr. Neath. What is it?"

"Well, if you want to know, they've caught Neath with the notes," her father cried. "That's what it is, my girl. The parson's booked for gaol."

"Don't you dare say it!"
Rage played tricks with her voice. "If you put him in

the dock, I'll never speak to you again."
Sir Ernest flinched. "Look here, Lou, this is no way to talk. We don't want a scene"

'I've finished. You heard what I said? That's all there is to it." She made for the door.

Reggie stretched out a meek hand. "One moment, Miss Smart. Do you happen to know this thing?" In his palm lay the silver cross.

"Of course I know it. It's mine. Where did you get it?"

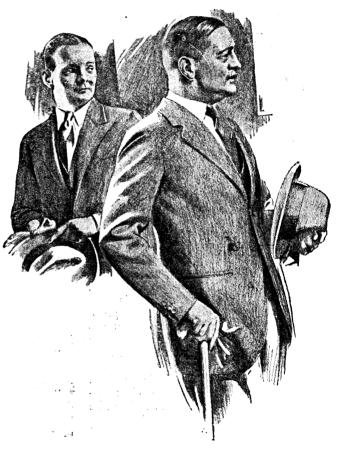
"It was found in this room after the money was stolen."

"Well, it's mine." She faced her father again. "You can guess when I dropped it, can't you? Better tell them." And she whirled out and the door banged.

"I'm sorry, gentlemen." Sir Ernest was shaken. "I'm afraid my girl has rather a

quick temper."

"Oh, quite natural, quite human," Reggie purred. "And takin' up her suggestion—



can you guess when she dropped it?"
"I suppose so." Sir Ernest wiped his mouth. "The fact is she was in the room here with me just before the money was stolen. We had a bit of a misunderstanding and you know she does get rather upset."

"Oh, yes. Yes. About Mr. Neath?"

"No, sir, nothing whatever to do with Neath. If you must know, it was about her going off for the week-end, which I didn't want, but she got in a fine taking and I dare say she might have dropped anything.

Anyway, if she says it's hers, it is, and that's that."

"And did she go off for the week-end?"

Reggie purred.

"Yes, she did. She went straight away. Anything else you want to know?"

"Well, yes," Reggie smiled. "Yes. Quite a lot."

Sir Ernest stared. "I can't tell you any

more, I give you my word."

"Then you'd better not prosecute just

"'Why, yes. Certainly this is it. There is still a note inside. No doubt that is why I kept it.'"

yet." Reggie stood up. "Good-bye." He took Colonel Tresham out.

The Colonel came meekly. The Colonel settled down in the car and gazed at him. "Well, Mr. Fortune, you have a way with you," he said. "It is an extraordinary case. It keeps on opening out. That silver thing—we could make nothing of it—then you told us it was South American and we thought it convicted Neath—thank good-

ness you kept us quiet—and it turns out to be evidence against the girl."

"Oh, no. No. Evidence of a connection between Neath and the girl. That's what worried father; our getting that out."

The Colonel frowned. "What? I don't

follow."

"The thirg that holds up father is, he don't know what's coming next. No more do I. Very interestin' problem."

The Colonel pondered. "I should say what stops him is, he sees it was the girl sent the money to Neath."

"It could be," Reggie murmured.

The Colonel smiled. "Girls are like that, what? With a young woman and a romantic persecuted parson, anything

can happen."

Reggie moved in his seat. Reggie gazed at the Colonel with dreamy interest. "Yes. Quite a lot. Yes. A queer case. As you were saying. It keeps on openin' out. Always something else in the landscape. Very exhaustin'. I want my lunch." He sat up. "My only aunt! I do want lunch. Can one eat the lunch of Fotton?" Colonel Tresham said there was a decent inn.

But when they came to the inn, Reggie lingered outside looking dreamily at the church and the house beside the church and a small car by its door. The Colonel entered, negotiated for lunch and called to him: "There's cold ham, Mr. Fortune—"

"A ham or so, yes," Reggie mumbled. "And stay me with tankards. Look. What's that?" His dreamy eyes indicated the house with the

"That's the vicarage. Neath's house, you know."

"Oh, yes. And does Neath keep a car?"
"Good heavens, no. And I shouldn't have thought he had many people call on him in cars."

"Well, well," said Reggie; and sighed.
"Ham and beer. Yes. How can man die
better than facing fearful odds?" But in
an absent-minded way he absorbed much

beer and ham, and his animation was restored. He was discoursing of the ham which is fed with peaches, the ham of Westphalia, the ham of Bohemia, the ham which is cured with treacle, analysing their several virtues, when a small car shot by the window. "Oh, yes. That's who calls on Mr. Neath in a car," he said.

"Who was it?"

"Miss Smart. And she isn't going back to her father. That's very interesting. I think we'll call on Mr. Neath too."

"I suppose that silly chit is in love with

the parson," said the Colonel.

"Ît could be," Reggie mumbled. The look of pain in his bewildered eyes sharpened. "But that man's straight, you know. There's something," his hand made a queer, groping gesture, "something nasty.".

The Colonel stared at him. "You go

beyond me, Mr. Fortune."

When they knocked at the vicarage door, Neath opened it. "So!" He drew himself up. "You have your orders from the knight. You are bidden summon me to stand my trial."

"Oh, no, no. Nothing like that," said Reggie gently. "I've been thinking about what you said. And it's brought me asking

you to help us."

"Why then, come in. I send no man away who asks help of me." Neath took them into a dilapidated room. The ceiling was dingy and cracked and flakes of plaster from it lay on the carpet, a carpet with pattern and colour trampled into threadbare drab. The wallpaper was stained and faded and here and there hung loose. Rickety home-made shelves held a few books. The other furniture was a table and four wooden chairs. "Be seated, sirs. What help can I give you?"

"I hope you can help us to discover who

sent that money to you."

"I have told you I do not know." Neath frowned.

"I'm acceptin' all you told us. But that can't end the case, Mr. Neath."

"I can tell you no more. I fear nothing. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do

right?"

"Yes, yes. I believe that too," said Reggie gravely. "But it has to be done through men. And it's my job to puzzle out what is right in the business. So I ask for your help."

"You speak well, young man." Neath's harsh face showed some kindliness. "My heart is warmed to you. But you speak of

right according to the law. I have a higher duty. See you, sir, the knight testifies these moneys were stolen from him. Of that I do not know, but since it is made clear they came to me and he claims them, I must render them to him again, and will do so as I may. But who was the thief, I cannot tell, and it is not for me, a priest, to seek him out. For you serve the law, but I the gospel."

"Yes. It may be. But you can't leave it so. While we don't know who the thief

is, other people bear the blame."

"The blame of men! Of men who know not what they do. Sir, I care nothing for that. I fear nothing."

"I wasn't thinking about you," Reggie said sharply. "There's something beyond you, Mr. Neath. Who sent you the money? And why was it sent?"

For the first time Neath was shaken. "Surely for a relief of my necessities?" he

stammered.

"Was it? Or was it to ruin you and drive you out of Fotton?"

Neath wiped his lips with a ragged handkerchief. "I dare not think so."

"Do you think you have no enemies?"
"Every priest who does his duty has enemies."

"Yes. And who are yours?"

Neath started up. "Get thee behind me!" he cried.

"Oh, no. No. I'm not tempting you. I say if there has been a trick played to disgrace the Vicar of Fotton, it's your duty to expose the man who is striking at the church."

Neath's face worked. "Sir, forgive me a cruel word. I am humbled. You have been more righteous than I. Yet it is utterly true, I know nothing, nothing can I say. What would you have of me?"

"Well, I should like to have the envelope in which the notes came," said Reggie.

"The envelope? I cannot tell. Without doubt I destroyed it." He turned to the cold fireplace where waste paper lay scattered.

"Wouldn't be there now, would it?" said Colonel Tresham. "You had the

money a week ago."

"Did I?" Neath looked blank. "Indeed, yes. I received it on the Monday. I remember. I thought it so kindly a providence coming quickly after the knight had denied me. But the envelope may be here yet. The woman who serves me has many cares in her own household, poor soul, and spares me but a few hours. This room is

seldom cleansed." He turned the papers over hopefully. "No, it is not here. That is strange. There are some even older. Ah, did I keep it, perhaps?" He hurried to the table and tugged a drawer. came at last a mess of papers jumped out. "Why, yes. Certainly this is it. There is still a note inside. No doubt that is why I kept it."

Colonel Tresham grunted. Reggie took the envelope. "One pound note: and a bit of the local paper about your county court case: cut out with a penknife: envelope post office make with embossed stamp: posted on that Saturday at Leamore: addressed in laborious script: with a fountain pen: ostentatiously disguised writing. Yes." He looked up. His round face had the innocence of an inquiring child. "Where is Leamore?"

"An adjacent village, sir," said Neath. "Small place between here and Tremley,"

said the Colonel.

Neath turned away. Reggie's plaintive eyes gazed at his back. "In your parish, Mr. Neath?"

"Yes, sir, Leamore is in my parish."

Neath fussed with his papers.

"I suppose the parish is rather large?" Reggie murmured.

Neath did not answer. "You go right

up to Tremley, don't you?" said the Colonel.

"That is so. The parish contains a great

space."

"Would you look at this script again?" Reggie said meekly. "Does it suggest any writing you know?"

Neath took it gingerly. "It appears the writing of one who studied not to be known."

"And now you can think of no one who wants to ruin you?" Reggie said slowly. "No one who has a reason? Some shameful reason?"

"Sir, sir, I have done no wrong," Neath

cried. "God knows my heart."

"I'm not thinking of you," Reggie said sharply. "I'm thinking of the man who tried to get you convicted of theft. What else has he done? Why does he want you out of Fotton?"

"I can tell you nothing. God is my

witness. I can tell you nothing."

Reggie bit his lip. "You know, this is very unsatisfactory, Mr. Neath," Colonel Tresham complained.

"Sir, I am not to satisfy you. I do as I must. Go."

The Colonel began to talk loudly, but

Reggie said "Good-bye, Mr. Neath," and took him away.

The Colonel plumped down in the car and started it at a rocket speed. "Quite so. Yes." Reggie's feet came down to the floor again. "Irritatin' creatures, saints."

" Confound the fellow. He knows all about

it," the Colonel growled.

"He knows who did the trick. Yes. I wonder how much more he knows. There's something nasty behind. And if he knows of that, a saint ought to tell."

"The fellow's a play actor being noble and

romantic."

"My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap! Not romantic, no. He's as hard as nails. He's keeping strict to his rules. He means to do what he thinks right, whoever goes to hell. Very awkward temperament—for the police."

"Well, I don't know," the Colonel grumbled. "What do you want to do?"

"Go back to Avonbury. Employ your active and intelligent police to discover who lives at Tremley."

"You mean Leamore. The letter came from Leamore. But there's nothing to be made of that. Leamore is next door to Fotton. Any of the Fotton people might post there."

"Is that so?" Reggie murmured. "Very interesting. But I did mean Tremley. It was the name of Tremley made him jump."

When they came to the office in Avonbury a small car was at the door. "Well, well," said Reggie. "So this is where she was going."

They told the Colonel Miss Smart was waiting to see him. She began to talk as she came into the room. "What's my

father going to do?"

"I can't say, because I don't know," the Colonel snapped.

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"You've no right to ask these questions, Miss Smart. And I shan't answer."

"All right, if you're afraid! Well, listen then. I've got something to tell you. I've been to see Mr. Neath. I told him if my father prosecuted him for stealing the notes, I should go into the witness-box and swear I took them and sent them to him. There!"

Colonel Tresham glared at her. "But that was very naughty of you," Reggie

murmured.

"Don't like it, do you?" She laughed ferociously. "Well, wait. Mr. Neath told me that I mustn't. There! Now do you see the kind of man he is?"

"Yes, I think so," Reggie smiled. "And do you always do what Mr. Neath tells you?"

She flushed, and she was red before.

"I'm not being rude, you know. That's one of the problems in the case."

"What do you mean?" She came

nearer.

"If you told us just the truth it would be more use to Mr. Neath than playing tricks. You didn't send him the money. But you did have a quarrel with your father that morning. Was that about Mr. Neath?"

"No, it wasn't," she said eagerly. "Mr. Neath wasn't mentioned. It was about

Lord Westow."

"What on earth has Westow got to do

with it?" said the Colonel.

"I didn't say he had." She was uncomfortable. "I don't know. Well, I'm going to tell you everything. If they try to hurt Mr. Neath, it shall all come out. Lord Westow has been asking me to marry him. I—I didn't mind him, but I don't care about him, and my father wanted me to. So I asked Mr. Neath what I ought to do."

"What, is he your confessor or something?" said the Colonel with disgust.

"No he isn't. He doesn't hear confessions. Anyway, there wasn't anything to confess. But I wanted him to advise me because—because he's a good man. Can't you understand that? And Mr. Neath said I mustn't."

"Said you mustn't marry Westow? Oh,

did he?" the Colonel snorted.

"And did you tell Lord Westow Mr. Neath

was against him?" said Reggie.

"Of course I didn't. I just told him I couldn't. That's all I said to father. And father was furious."

"Oh, yes. Is it possible they suspect Mr.

Neath influenced you?"

"I don't know. Father's been quarrelling with Mr. Neath ever since he came to Fotton."

"And Lord Westow too?"

"Oh, Lord Westow just sneers about him."

"Lord Westow also noticed you know Mr. Neath. Yes. About that silver cross—did anybody know Neath had given you that?"

Again she blushed. "How did you know?"

"My dear lady! Oh, my dear lady!"

Reggie murmured.

"Yes, he did give it me. It doesn't matter. But nobody knew. I didn't wear

it to show off, of course. I can't think how I lost it."

"In the agitation with your father that Saturday morning. What was the agitation

about, Miss Smart?"

"I told you. About Lord Westow. Of course, I didn't want to meet him again. Father knew that. And father asked him to come and stay. I didn't know till he came down to dinner on Friday night. couldn't get away then. But I went to father in the morning and told him I wouldn't stand it, I'd go away. He made an awful scene. But I went. Oh, I wish, I wish I hadn't. You see, when I came back it had all happened, police and everything, and father didn't tell me for days. I would never have let him do it if I'd been there." At last she showed signs of tears. "Now I've told you the truth—all of it."

"Yes, I think so," Reggie murmured. "Thank you. But don't tell anyone else, Miss Smart. And for Heaven's sake don't

try to interfere any more."

He got rid of her to find the Colonel staring at him.

"What on earth do you make of all that, sir?"

"Let's get on. Let's get on," said Reggie. "Do you know Tremley?" The Colonel said it was a tiny little place on the county boundary. "Remote and obscure. Yes. Where's Billson, the excellent Billson? Send him off to Tremley one time. He's got to find out who lives at Tremley that's mixed up with Lord Westow and Mr. Neath." The Colonel began to say something. "Don't talk, do it. We're too late already."

The Colonel swallowed and rang for Billson and snapped out his orders. "And hurry on with it," he said bitterly. "Mr.

Fortune's nervous."

"Do my best, sir." Billson strode out.

"It beats me what you expect to find by fussing round Tremley," said the Colonel.

"Me too," Reggie murmured. "The

"Me too," Reggie murmured. "The mind is blank. But there is something to find: and it's nasty: and it must be at Tremley. Tremley was what made Neath jump, and he don't jump easy."

The Colonel made a scornful noise. "I don't understand all this talk about something nasty behind. I see nothing to make such a fuss about. I agree it looks as if somebody put up this business to get Neath in a mess. Smart, perhaps, or Westow, or both. Westow could have got the notes. He was in the house. A dirty trick enough. But you can see motives for them. This

fool of a girl is crazy about Neath. He put her off marrying Westow. He——"

"Yes. Why did he?"

"Well, suppose he's in love with her himself"

"Oh, my aunt!" Reggie moaned. "My only aunt! Don't you see? Neath isn't human. He's a saint. If he told her she mustn't marry Westow, it was because he knew something that damned the man."



"'You've no right to ask these questions, Miss Smart.

And I shan't answer."

"I don't know what Neath would think damns a man. It might be nothing at all. And it was something he was afraid to tell us."

"Afraid?" Reggie laughed. "My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap! He was never

afraid in his life."

"Why couldn't he tell us, then?" the Colonel fumed.

"Because he's a saint, confound him." Reggie stood up bit by bit. "Makes me feel old and sinful. Well, well. Let me know when Billson has anything." He meandered out.

It was late that night, and in his room at the "Lion" Reggie was drinking his night-cap of simple seltzer when the Colonel and Billson came to him. "Oh, Peter! Don't look at me like that!" he moaned. "What have you found?"

"God knows what it is," said the Colonel.

"You were right, Mr. Fortunc. There was somebody at Tremley Westow used to go and see. Neath too. A woman. And she's dead. She died the week before this business with the money." He stared at Reggie with a certain ferocity. "Is that what you expected? It beats me. The further we go into this cursed case, the more queer stuff we find and not a sign of an end to it."

Reggie did not answer.
"She was dead before," he
murmured. "I was afraid
——" He drew a long
breath.

"Afraid of what?" the Colonel cried.

"Afraid it was going to be my fault. Well, well. I haven't missed anything, then."

"Missed anything!" said the Colonel. "I should say not. You've been seeing things we couldn't see all the time. You seem to have expected this woman dying at Tremley. It's uncanny."

"Oh, no. No. I didn't expect her. I didn't know. I don't know now. But it was plain something nasty had to be kept hidden, and there was something queer

about Tremley. Let Billson talk. Who was she, Billson?"

Billson cleared his throat importantly. "Well, sir, about five years ago a lady came to live in Tremley. There's a good little house there used to be a gentleman farmer's. This lady took it. Mrs. Vernon by name, supposed to be a widow. Not so young, but a good looker. Always lived very quiet, but from time to time Lord Westow used to go and see her. They

talked a bit in the village-you know what the country is—it don't seem to me there's anything you could say for certain wasn't respectable. Still, he did go, and the lady not being in any county society, it's queer: all the more her settling herself down there right off the map. Since Mr. Neath came to Fotton he's been over to see her now and then. There's nothing in that. He visits every house, rich and poor, where they'll let him in. However, there it is. She was living kind of secret, and nobody much went to the house but these two. Well, she's been in bad health and Dr. Newsom of Fotton has attended her. Fortnight ago she was found on a hill above the village lying pretty near dead. The chap that found her says she looked ghastly. She was that pale he thought she was gone, but her eyes kind of stared big, he says, and there was a sort of rattly breathing. They carried her down to her house. They say she was all cold, kind of blue, and yet sweating." Reggie stirred in his chair. "Well, sir, they got the doctor to her, but by what I can make out, she never came to. She died the same day. The doctor gave a death certificate all right and they didn't think anything of it in the village, she being known to be ill."

"Oh, yes. And what did the doctor put

on the certificate?"
"I couldn't tell you, sir. They talk about heart disease. It would look all right, for what I see. Dr. Newsom's well known. There's only this. Lord Westow was over there the day after she died and had a long talk with the servants, and they're gone off nobody knows where. The talk in the village is that Mrs. Vernon left no will or anything, and nobody knows anything about her people."

Reggie turned to Colonel Tresham. "You want me to see the doctor, don't you?"

"Do I ? "

"Oh, yes. You think there's cause for suspicion. So you're telephoning Dr. Newsom to-morrow that he'd better come and see Mr. Fortune in the chief constable's office."

"He won't like that, you know."

"I don't mean him to," Reggie murmured. "You'll have to trace those vanishing servants. And you might as well find out where Mrs. Vernon's money came from."

Colonel looked uncomfortable. "This is going to make a lot of noise, Mr. Fortune. Do you mean you feel sure there's been foul play-and Westow was in it?"

"I mean it wasn't a natural death: and Lord Westow knows what it was."

"Westow!" Colonel Tresham muttered. "I'd never have thought that of him."

"No. One doesn't sometimes, till they've done it. Any special evidence of character about Lord Westow?"

"I can't say that. He's an arrogant fellow, rather a bully, but-

"That'll do, thanks," said Reggie. "That's the man for the part. Happy to meet Lord Westow."

In the morning Reggie went over to the chief constable's office, to find the Colonel nervous and uncomfortable with a blustering doctor. Dr. Newsom was well fed and purple and of an important manner. He made the most of it. He was explaining that a professional man was not to be bothered with futile meddling inquiries when Reggie "Ah, Mr. Fortune!" The Colonel gasped relief. Dr. Newsom ignored him. Dr. Newsom's eloquence swept on. The Colonel must know that his professional experience gave him the right to say any suspicion in the case of Mrs. Vernon was preposterous. And a man of his standing-

"Oh, yes. Yes," Reggie murmured.
"But here you are. Very wise."

"Mr. Reginald Fortune?" Dr. Newsom

"Yes, you know who I am. Then you know if I have suspicions they're not preposterous. And I have."

"I don't know what you mean, sir." "You certified that Mrs. Vernon died a

natural death."

"I did, sir. There's no doubt about it. The poor lady had been a patient of mine for months. She was suffering from myocardial degeneration. That was the cause of her death." The Colonel looked at "Disease of the muscles of the Reggie. heart," Dr. Newsom explained.

"Thanks very much," Reggie murmured.

"Who called you in to the case?" "Mrs. Vernon herself, sir." Dr. Newsom's red face darkened. "I've attended her ever since she lived here."

"Oh, yes. Do you know who she was?" "I know nothing of her private affairs."

"I wonder," Reggie murmured, and gazed at Dr. Newsom with cold curiosity. Lord Westow ever consulted you about her condition?" Dr. Newsom was not in a hurry to answer. "Yes. Be careful."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Fortune. Certainly Lord Westow has asked me about her health from time to time-when I've met him-very natural in his lordship-he was an old friend of hers-nothing more."

"What medicine did you send her?"

"I-I-really, Mr. Fortune, you must know nothing could cure the disease."

"Yes. You'd better assume I know. The question is, what did you give her?"

"Nothing of any importance. Occasionally—just to relieve her—she had difficulty in breathing sometimes—you will admit it's the regular practice—I sent a draught with a little morphia."

"Oh, yes. You sent her morphia.

body suggest that to you?"

"Of course not. I hope I know how to treat my own patients. Certainly she did complain a great deal. I—really I couldn't say. I believe Lord Westow may have asked for something to soothe her. I don't know. What do you imply, Mr. Fortune?"

"Didn't it occur to you that her symptoms, when you found her dying, were the

symptoms of morphia poisoning?"
"It's impossible!" Dr. Newsom wiped his face. "I can't believe it. I never sent her any but the smallest doses. I've gone over my stock of morphia. I can account for it all."

"Oh. It did occur to you. And you certified she died a natural death." Reggie "I don't contemplated him with disgust. want any more from you.'

"But-but-but what do you propose to do, Mr. Fortune?" the doctor stammered.

And Reggie laughed.

It was not a genial sound. It made the Colonel move in his chair, it scared Dr. Newsom. He muttered something about consider his position—consult his solicitor he stumbled out of the room.

Reggie reached for the telephone. "Get me through to Scotland Yard," he said.

WO days afterwards a car drove up to the chief constable's office and the Hon. Sidney Lomas got out of it. Brisk and sprightly, he came in to Reggie and Colonel Tresham. "Well, Reginald, you have been and gone and done it. You come down here to a theft of three ha'pence and turn it into murder by a large, live lord." turned to the Colonel. "Nice young gentleman for a quiet tea-party, isn't he?"

"It's an ugly case," Mr. Lomas." The

Colonel was shocked.

" Quite. Looks like a big scandal," said Lomas cheerfully. He sat down and lit a cigarette. "Well, Bell's found those servants for you. He scared 'em white. They say they always thought there was something between Westow and Mrs. Vernon. Westow paid 'em off after the death: said he was doing it as an old friend. I should judge he paid 'em handsome. It took some work to make the parlourmaid remember Westow was with Mrs. Vernon on the morning before she died: with her a long time. They swear she went out alone afterwards."

"With the poison in her," the Colonel

growled.
"Yes, I think so," Reggie murmured. "Not a nice man, the Lord Westow. went up on a bit of a hill. You can see the towers of Westow's baronial hall from it. She used to go up there quite a lot. And that's where she was found, Lomas."

"Poor thing," Lomas shrugged. "A bad

business."

"What do you suppose he was to her?" "My dear Colonel!" Lomas shrugged again. "I can only tell you he's been financing her for years. The money paid into her bank here came from his in London."

"And the scoundrel got tired of her and finished her off," the Colonel snorted.

"The old story. This Smart girl came in sight with pots of money and his lordship decided to be off with the old love."

"Have your men traced him yet? I

warned you he'd gone off."

"No news yet. We'll get him. Now, Reginald, you want her body."

'Yes, please. As soon as you can."

"I have the exhumation order."

"We're only waiting for that," said the "I've made all arrangements." He rang for Superintendent Billson.

Lomas lit another cigarette. "No doubt

you'll find morphia, I suppose?"

"Oh, no. No. Clear symptoms. fat fool of a doctor knows she was poisoned."

Superintendent Billson came in. "About that exhumation, Billson," said the Colonel.

Get on with it at once."

"Very good, sir." Billson hesitated. "The Reverend Neath's here, sir, wishing to see you."

"What's he want?"

"I couldn't say, sir. But being as she's buried in his churchyard——"

"Oh, all right. Bring him in."

"Coming now, is he?" A puzzled smile twisted Reggie's face. "I thought we should hear from Mr. Neath before all was over. But now-I wonder."

Neath stood before them: lank, shabby, proudly erect. And it seemed to Reggie that the man was even more worn and harassed than at first. But still sunken deeper in the dark face his eyes glowed fierce. He was still fighting. "Chief constable," he made a formal bow, "I have to speak with you. Shall I speak before these men?"

"If it's about your case, they know as much as I do," said the Colonel. "You've met Mr. Fortune. This is the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, Mr. Neath."

"Sirs, your servant. It is nothing which touches me. It is in the matter of the woman Vernon. Do they know of that also?"

"I'm in their hands."

"Say not so. You are in the hands of God and answerable unto Him. But if these men command, to them I speak. Sirs, I have heard from the man Billson that there is a design to dig in my churchyard and discover the body of this poor woman. I must ask you what you intend against her?"

"You know, you've no right to ask anything about it," said Lomas blandly.

"But suppose I say we're going to find out if she was murdered," said Reggie. "Any objection, Mr. Neath?"

"Be assured I have right to ask, sirs, and duty. This is your purpose, then—to dismember her unhappy body and pry into it for poison——"

"Who said anything about poison?"

Lomas snapped.

"Peace, sir, let me speak. I know not what is in the power of your science. But to this search into her body I will tell you one objection that forbids it. What you find shall prove nothing, but delude you into doing wrong upon wrong."

"Oh, you know she was poisoned, then?"

said Lomas.

"You'd better tell us the other objec-

tions," Reggie murmured.

"I am here to speak. This I say to you. If you should dig up her body and take it to your laboratories, you will do a cruel and useless outrage to the dead form. If you should drag out the secrets of her life, you would blacken her fame among men to take a vengeance on a sinful man, which is not just."

"You see, we have to do what we're doing, because you wouldn't tell us what you knew," said Reggie. "It's not my blame, Mr. Neath. I must find out the truth as I can."

"I blame you not. Blame me not either. I had no right to speak, for the truth was given me in trust. Now I speak to stay you from black wrong. The woman Ver-

non was of my people, and when she lay sick she told me of her sorrows. This Lord Westow married her in youth, before he was a lord. She was humbly born and he would not own her his wife. He placed her apart in that lonely house and still resorted to her, and that she endured, being a humble woman by nature. She fell ill and suffered much. She discovered that the Lord Westow sought after the daughter of the knight at Fotton, and it sharpened her pain. She learnt to take the drug morphia for relief of the pangs."

"Oh, yes. Where did she get the mor-

phia?" said Reggie quickly.

"I cannot tell that. Sometimes I have thought that the Lord Westow procured it for her. But I dare not charge it against him. She said nothing to me of the procuring of it. Sometimes she would promise me to take no more. But always she returned to it again. And often she would declare to me she was resolved some day to seek the peace of death by the accursed drug. God of His grace have mercy upon her. She suffered much." He bent his head and was silent for awhile. "Sirs, I have told you all!" he cried. "What now? I charge you, do not tear asunder her poor body to publish her shame."

Reggie stood up. "Oh, no. No. That's the end," he said, and held out his hand. "You've been tried high, Mr. Neath."

"Sir, I know not why you should say so. I have never had a doubt what was right for me to do."

"No. I suppose you haven't," Reggie smiled. "And yet this scoundrel Westow was trying to convict you of theft so nobody should believe what you could tell of him and Mrs. Vernon. And now you choose to clear him of a charge of murder. I doubt if I should have done that. Would you, Lomas?"

"Sir, sir, speak not so lightly." Neath was shocked.

"Confound the fellow," Lomas cried.
"He goes scot-free. And it's a million to one he tempted the poor creature to death by supplying her with morphia."

"Not a nice man. No," Reggie smiled.

"I'm sorry."

"Sirs, sirs, be content." Neath held up his hand. "He shall go to his account. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord, 'I will repay." And with that he left them.

"Yes. Once I said I should be happy to meet Lord Westow," Reggie murmured. "I

hope I never shall."

THE FAILURE

By NELLIE TOM-GALLON

ILLUSTRATED BY ROSETTA MANN

HE effect of surprise showed even more in the poise of her figure than in her face as she bent over the sleeping man; for Marcia Welling's features had been so schooled by long practice to immobility that they were less easily affected than were the muscles of her long, slim body.

Her first movement, when she had come sharply round the big tree to find a man stretched asleep in its shadow, had been to stir him to wakefulness with her sunshade. But somehow, as she stretched her arm to

do that, instinct stopped her.

For he was not a tramp, this man asleep on the bank above her stretch of river. Shabby, most certainly, but clean-shaven, and sound as to clothing. The face was thin and hollow-cheeked in the abandonment of sleep, but the lips were clean-cut, with something pathetic about them. For a normal man's lips are generally set in a firmness that has a woman's respect; but when they lose that grip in sleep is when all the maternal in the woman, watching, comes uppermost.

She spoke a musical "Hello!" to the figure at her feet, with no result. Tried it again -and finally slid down gracefully to kneel on the grass beside the man. From there

she called with more vigour:

"Hello!-you! What are you doing here?"

When he opened his eyes, dazed and round, he blinked once or twice to be sure of his vision; but the fact remained that an extremely beautiful woman was kneeling beside Terry Nealda as he at last sat up, staring wildly.

"I'm awfully sorry!" he said. "I just sat down-I must have fallen asleep."

"Don't you know you're trespassing?"

she said severely.

"I'm really most frightfully sorry," he said, and while he spoke she had time to notice that his mouth had set to its "daytime" line. It wasn't so pleasant that way, the corners dragged down too much. "I came in across the stepping-stones from the Alders meadow

by the bridge. I reckoned to walk along the river as far as the town, that's all. really apologise for falling asleep---"

"You know this place, then?" she asked.

"You're not a stranger here?"

He had pulled off his shabby soft hat and was staring at it, straightening it to its best behaviour as he answered:

"A very long time ago, a few centuries I think, I knew this place. Topping trout up under the bridge, there used to be!" He was staring that way, smiling reminiscently. but swung round as he heard a faint rustle from the woman beside him. But she was not moving to get up; she was only leaning forward, her eyes alight and questioning. In that way she had changed from the very dignified woman who had told him he was trespassing to something younger and more pleasant.

"A very long time ago-why?-who are you?" she said. Her tone was excited, but

he answered her quite simply:

"My name is Terry Nealda, and I used to stay here—before the war, with Antony Welling. I was at Cambridge with him. Did you know the Wellings, father and son?"

She looked so long, straightly, into his eyes that he began to feel awkward. But it was quite unemotionally she said, after that deep

"I am the younger Antony Welling's widow, and I think I can never forgive you, Terry Nealda, for forgetting me."

He knelt in front of her and she stayed very still, quite serious. In a minute he said:

"Good Heaven!—you're that kid, Tony's cousin, that used to get ratty and slam at us with a golf-stick when we teased her! But, anyway—you didn't remember me, either and you were thin——" He waved his hands feebly.

"I still am," she said, and her lips were

beginning to lift.

"Yes—but I mean you were ugly with your thinness. And now! Well, did you really marry good old Tony? You know the war broke into Cambridge and sent us flying in all directions. I seem to have made one jump out to Egypt, and there I was stranded, couldn't get a move till the Armistice. And Tony——"

"Tony came home on leave in '17, and—and he was so worn and tired. He held so tightly to the old place, and his father—and me. He said over there the worst feeling was the being cut off from everything that had been an absolute part of your daily life. He asked me to marry him, right away, and I was glad and proud. I was eighteen then, and he was such a cheery, fine boy, wasn't he?" She was staring away across the river into the dead years; but the man's voice brought her back.

"I see," he said; then more slowly, "He was fine—I saw his name in the lists."

"Yes. Tony never came back after that day he waved from the train window to me, down in the town there. I came back to Abbott's Hill with old Mr. Welling—and we waited. But not for long." Her voice was as still in its tone as the set lines of her face.

"Poor old father! It must have broken him frightfully. I remember he was wrapped

up in his boy."

She stirred a little from her immobility

with the sigh she gave.

"My uncle was never quite the same again," she said softly. "Quite gentle and kind, but he drifted down into silence and dreams, though he lived on for four years."

"And you've lived on here? Somehow it's good to think of you here, in the old place—it makes the memories complete."

She smiled round at him and nodded.

"Yes—it was a double inheritance. I am the last of the Wellings. I married without changing my name, and I've lived on here—with my memories." She lifted her chin and spoke in a more ordinary tone. "But won't you tell me about yourself? How do you come to be down in this quiet place, and why didn't you come to the house and ask for anybody named Welling?"

He was pulling at that shabby hat again, and his voice came to her dimmed, less strong

and forceful than it had been.

"Oh!—I didn't know who was up at the house—only knew that Tony wasn't. Hadn't the faintest idea *you* were there. I was just passing through Middlewade, on business."

"Passing through?—but surely you will stay with me, even if it is only for a day or two?" she said eagerly, and he found the kindliness of her look opening the door to some wonderful vision. He enjoyed that for

a moment till he saw the brightness fading into puzzlement because of his silence, then he answered:

"Why—thanks awfully. But I—I'm just a traveller, you know, and I think I'd better stay down in the town. It's delightful, though, to see you again."

"Traveller?—do you mean a commercial traveller? You go about arranging business for some firm—is that it?" she asked, and there was the faint suggestion of the attitude of the woman of property in her manner of speech; as if she had the right to inquire into the circumstances of those about her.

"Yes—that's it. A commercial traveller," he said, and scrambled to his feet. "And I must get along now, or I shall get no business

done to-day."

"But even if you won't stay with me, you'll let me see you again before you leave, won't you?" she said; and she, too, was on her feet, holding out her hand. "Come back and dine."

"No. I can't do that," he said definitely.

"But if I might lunch to-morrow——" The something of over-eagerness in his look seemed to add shabbiness to his appearance, and made her more than ever gracious and smiling.

"That would be delightful—do please come to-morrow. One-thirty, then—and it's been simply splendid to see you again."

When he had vanished into the mist of sun beyond the river, Marcia sat down again on the bank; and she was smiling as she drifted back through the years to those days when she and Antony Welling and Terry Nealda had romped and fought, and made for each other the joy of life.

There was that time when she had fallen out of the punt when she was learning to pole—along there by the bend under the willows. And one of the boys had held out a paddle to help her back to the punt, but the other—and that was Terry—had flopped in after her.

Only in the end she had had to save Terry, really, because he had got mixed up in some deadly weeds.

IN the stiff, repressed thing that life had come to be for her, that curious encounter with an old friend made a genuine thrill.

She wondered what kind of goods Terry "travelled" in; obviously he had not cared to tell her. She drew back, in thought, a little haughtily, from the idea that it might be something unpleasant—and then mentally shook herself, calling herself snob!

She would give Terry a splendid lunch to-morrow, and never let him mention his work. Only, for the sake of old days she would make for him a perfect memory, that they should share between them, as they did those of the old days.

She would give him something of Antony's, too; perhaps his watch, as a keepsake.

So her thrill lasted through the hours; when she had to make a formal call at the Rectory the women she met there registered that she looked remarkably well—which in a woman's phraseology means "prettier than usual." They asked polite little questions of each other as to whether Mrs. Welling had any visitors staying at Abbott's Hill?

After her call she walked round the curve of the Green, getting here and there a respectful greeting. Down at the end of the long oval there was the usual monthly fair in progress on the "common land." In her character of Lady Bountiful of the village she glanced at the swings and roundabouts and hoped they were all safe. And in the end stopped by the gate of the Fair Ground because the three Rectory children were just coming out with their nurse.

She loved the children, and the smallest of them came with a sort of puppyish roll straight for her, shouting about "Lions an' tijers."

"We've just been to the circus, Ma'am," the nurse said. "Master Oliver loved the animals—he wanted to stroke the lions!"

"You can come an' see lions now—you don't have to pay one bit!" the small boy in Marcia's arms declared. "Come 'long—see lions!" He positively tried to throw himself towards the menagerie tent from Marcia's arms.

"I don't know that I like wild animals in cages much, darling," she told him, but he had scrambled out of her arms and was dragging her towards the tent.

They skirted the back of the stalls on their way, keeping out of the crowd; the noise deafened Marcia, and the smell of the trampled grass and the animals and the mass of people was sour to her senses. In her perfectly ordered life, subdued always to the uttermost delicacy in her surroundings that money could give, this riot of primitive noise and smell was offensive. But the child was insistent.

Marcia tipped the man at the menagerie tent and he shepherded them round; brought them, without too much crowding, safely out again to the dry heat of the late afternoon. As the group escaped again towards the gate they came round the outside of the circus tent to which the menagerie was attached. There was a huddle of packing-cases and decrepit dress-baskets piled about the steam trailer that drew the waggons, a great deal of busy coming and going of the circus people, in and out of costume, from under the lifted flap of the tent.

There was the sound of shouting, cursing voices inside the tent, and Marcia tried to hurry the children a little to get beyond it. But the canvas slapped and bellied, and through the opening tumbled out two figures,

desperately fighting.

One of them was a big heavy man, in the buckskin breeches and high boots of the conventional ring-master—the other was one of the circus clowns, in a white cotton dress, with ridiculous designs in colours sewn on it. The face was daubed with white, and on the nose and round the mouth were heavy patches of red. It was a ghastly mask, stopping in the middle of the forehead where the high cap should have met the make-up; but the cap was gone, and the paint was smeared with another red, where the clown's nose was bleeding violently.

He was putting up a poor show in the fight; he seemed broken and cowed, and the other man's blows rained on his face and body. The ring-master was a heavy-weight; obviously used to "handling" men, in his rough world.

"Don't you give me any more of your lip, you—" he yelled, and a last upper-cut sent the clown flying, to land in a heap against the pile of baskets and lumber, his face turned up blankly to the sky.

And it was the smeared and degraded face of Terry Nealda.

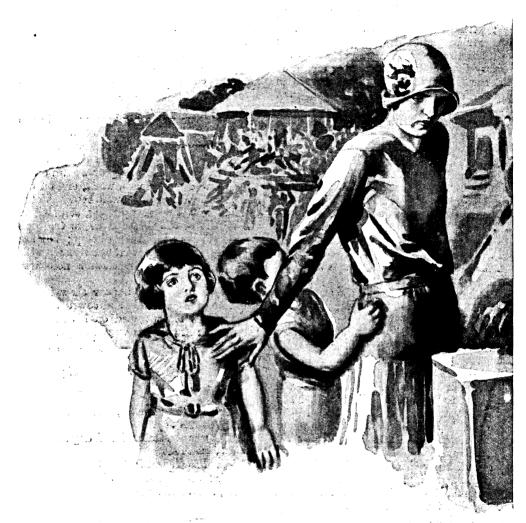
As he struggled at last to turn and raised himself, he looked straight into the eyes of Marcia, as he had done once before that day. The ring-master was standing over him, with fists ready—but the smeared face went down into the white-covered arms, and the bully saw that his clown needed no more "handling" that time. With a swagger he went off into the tent.

Panic-stricken, Marcia bent her face against the crying one of Oliver, who was in her arms, and went hurrying out of the field, leaving that ridiculous figure crouched on the ground.

BUT if she could leave the sight of the broken man who was a part of her memories, she could not leave the thought of him so easily. Through her solitary dinner, and afterwards when she went out to the

terrace where a maid came hurrying with a scarf for fear of chill, and a grey-haired butler poured her coffee with the air of performing a sacred rite, her thoughts went over and over the sickening round of the two figures to raise a laugh from the empty-minded, coming trooping in—

Amongst them was one with his misery hidden under fresh daubs of paint—one who had laughed and played and hoped, here in



struggling, and that smaller one with the bloody face going flying in a huddled heap to crouch on the ground.

She looked down into the valley where the lights blazed on that corner of the village, where the fair-ground was at its liveliest with the coming of darkness. She shuddered and felt physically sick at the thought of the circus tent with its crude hard lights, and the rows of sweating, vacant faces of the audience, piled on the benches.

She could imagine that fat brute of a ringmaster cracking his whip—the handful of men dressed up in all sorts of debasing rags this very house. What had happened to bring Terry Nealda down to such misery as this? Something disgraceful it must be—something at which she instinctively grew cold and shuddering.

She slept badly; her last waking thought had been a half-fear, half-hope that Terry would not keep that engagement for lunch the next day; and her earliest thought, in the hard clear light of morning, was the full hope that he would stay away.

Her morning was, as always, full of business, with the management of the great property that was hers. Her account books



"A last upper-cut sent the clown flying, to land in a heap against the pile of baskets and lumber, his face turned up blankly to the sky. And it was the smeared and degraded face of Terry Nealda."

and letters made a screen against thought for her, though over and over again she found that her pen was shaken by a shudder. Only then she knew that subconsciously the memory of that beastly sight of the day before still nagged at her.

In a panic then, she put out her hand to the bell to tell the butler to say his mistress was ill if anyone called—that was at half-past twelve. But she drew the hand back again; and an hour later she had changed her dress for one of the prettiest she owned, and was out on the terrace, watching the drive. she knew by then that her shrinking and shuddering must have made unmendable cracks in the casing of luxurious withdrawal which she had tried to close about herself.

Knew that she longed, with all the strength that was in her, for the man she had seen broken and beaten and degraded to come within sight; longed to put out her hands to him, to seize him and hold him and comfort him! She felt the colour rise in her cheeks now at the idea that had dared to come into her mind that she might turn her back on him and his degradation.

Now the fear was that he would not come. She should have stayed and helped himshould have faced that beastly bully. had lost her chance; had shown herself a-

There he was coming through the trees at the foot of the lawn, from the old path across the river where she had found him the day before. She drooped her head so that her eyes were hidden and she could watch him on that slow walk up to the house.

He was white-faced and there was the mark of bruising round his eye, but he came on

steadily, and he was *smiling*.

And at sight of that the last smallness and meanness gave way in her, and she was the mistress of a great house going eagerly to welcome one of her own kind—an honoured guest.

But even with that good feeling on either side the first words were a little breathless simply:

"I'm so glad you've come," she said.

"Nothing could have made me miss it," came quietly from him.

When they were on the terrace in the shade and her hands were charmingly busy with the cocktail she insisted on his drinking, she was readiest with words.

"I'm so glad you're early—lunch isn't quite ready yet—and I rather wanted to talk to

He looked up from the gold depths of his

glass where he had been enjoying the colour without tasting it and said steadily:

"I came early on purpose. There is something I've got to say, before I sit at your table with you. Antony wouldn't stand for it if I didn't make things clear to you, you know."

"Tell me everything, Terry-whether you want to or not. And please—not because of any feeling of loyalty to Antony, but because Iwant to know, and understand."

He was leaning forward with his elbows on his knees in the attitude in which he had sat on the river-bank the day before. It looked to her brooding eyes as if he had made a habit of that attitude, through long years, for the sake of shutting out the surroundings in which he lived. And he turned his untouched green glass with its golden liquid round and round as he found slow words:

"It's a long stretch of time I'm looking across to where you and Antony stand-it takes time to reckon it all up. I've been fairly careful not to look back more than I could help."

"Begin at the beginning, Terry. The war, that is," she said gently, yet with a steady demand; and he sat up straight, looking away into the glory of the stretch of garden before him.

"I was stuck out there in Egypt all through the war, as I told you; it was a year after the Armistice before I got home. Everything had gone to pieces in that time. You see, I'd only been a year at Cambridge when the call came. You didn't know my people—never came across them, did you?"

"No !-but I think I remember your father

was a clergyman."

"Yes. An awfully good chap with a parish in Birmingham. Good income-and he was only fifty, so he was spending it all on the education of my two sisters and myself. was right enough there; but the 'flu caught him in '18—do you remember what a time that was ?—and he'd been giving all he could of his rations to the children of his parish—he went. There was a life insurance that gave my mother enough to exist on—but this is boring for you?" He did not look round at her.

"I'll tell you when I'm no longer interested, Terry. Go on." She said it quietly and

unemotionally, but it satisfied him.

"Well—my sisters were all right. were fine; their war work had led them into straight ways of earning their living. But for me, I knew nothing useful—every job had gone to the men who got home first, it seemed. I was fit for a clerk's job, of the poorest sort, and there were thousands waiting for those." He was silent and she helped him on again.

"What did you do?" she asked, and he

laughed a little tired laugh.

"I threw up my head with a lordly gesture and said I was going to work with my hands to earn a living. And I have—and it seems as if my hands must be as incapable as my brain. I've earned an existence and nothing more."

"Where did you begin-why didn't you come to me? Antony was your friend."

"I knew he had a widow, yes-but even if I had known it was you, do you think I was going round begging? Oh!-lots of fellows did, I know. I wonder how they feel about it now? Anyway—it didn't occur to me. I was sound and well, I'd come through the war without a scratch—except on my soul, if I ever had one."

"You're bitter!"

He swung round then, and the sight of her tense face reminded him of other troubles than his own.

"For the "I'm awfully sorry," he said.

moment I'd forgotten Antony."

"I wasn't thinking of him just then," she admitted quite simply. "And, of course-I've never known what it meant to have to worry about money. It must be awful to fight this crowded world with nothing to help you-worse for you and your kind than for those poor people in the village who are satisfied so long as they're not hungry."

His face lit then, and won a smile from her. "That's just it. I started off with such hopes—My God!—the way my hopes soared! I loved animals and I got some sort of a job in a country stable. But the men who'd been brought up to that sort of thing could do it all so much better than I could—and they could get more satisfaction out of life on the pittance the work was worth than I could. suppose I was always fretting for something that they didn't need-some outlet towards the people and the life I'd always been used to. Anyway—for the last three years I've been travelling with circuses, helping with the horses, going on in a clown's dress in the circus, though the dress was the only funny thing about me-I parade the towns and villages, when we come to them, in burlesque rags, and lead a donkey that is supposed to kick me at intervals. Great pal of mine, that donkey; that was the row yesterday, because that swine of a fellow who owns the circus had been knocking Tinto about."

"And you went for him—that's good!"

But the sour thin laugh came again.

"And even there I was a failure, you see. That brute represents the world as far as I've known it—I'm always fighting it, and always getting the worst of it. And it was my usual luck that you, of all people, should have happened along at that moment."

I'm not going to say that," she said impulsively, and she was leaning towards him "Supposing I hadn't come past at the moment you were fighting splendidlywhat would you have done to-day?"

He straightened up then and lifted his chin

with a little kick.

"Oh !-- I was looking forward to coming up here, and lunching with you and seeing the place I had such a jolly time in, years ago; and dodging, more or less neatly, any polite inquiries you made as to my circumstances over 'commercial travelling'; shaking hands with you-and that was something in itself to look forward to-and going on with the circus to-morrow to its next pitch with a splendid hour to remember. But my luck wouldn't even last that far—only I wanted you to know, because you saw that filthy scene yesterday, that I can come here and sit at your table just for this interlude in life, and have nothing but failure to be ashamed of."

"That wasn't necessary to say," she said warmly. "You're Terry Nealda, and you couldn't do anything dirty. And, you know —I feel that I am the one of us two to be ashamed. Look at my life all these years since the war-it's disgraceful."

"How's that ?—down in the village they say you look after everybody; that since old Welling's death you've literally mothered everybody down there till they're spoiled."

"But that's been at no cost to myself!— I've simply spent money that would have been idle; and all the time I've been surrounded by a wall of luxury and ease that's abominable now, when I look at it through your eyes." She was twisting her hands, so that the fine diamonds glittered in the sun, and he saw her lips were tightly set.

"You were an adventurous kid-how did you come by your dignity?" he said with a chuckle that sounded to her like the Terry of years ago; and the colour flushed up into her face and she turned to him with almost anger. But his chuckle forced a laugh from

her, though a rather rueful one.

"Oh!—I grew into it, somehow. You see, after Antony went I settled down to look after his father—and I had to take the responsibility of things on my shoulders; and if you drag a train around with you long enough, you forget the freedom of short skirts. And I've never had anyone to blow in from the outside world, before, and tell me—well, that I'm ridiculous!" The flush was still in her face and she would not look at him, where he had turned fully towards her, still with that chuckle cleaning the lines from his face.

"That's evidently the one privilege of failure," he said. "You were always such an uppish kid that it's perfectly priceless to

be able to tease you again."

She laughed round at him, full-faced now; but he did not know that his change to boyishness had brought tears to her eyes, behind the laugh.

"I won't have you call yourself 'failure,'" she said, and now there was so much emotion in her voice that he was tinglingly on his guard against the reaction to it in his own brain.

"Listen!" she went on after a moment.
"Do you want—do you have to stay in
England, necessarily?"

"No—I've messed things up for myself, but not for anyone else. There's nothing to keep me here. Why?" The laughter was gone from his face now, and he was looking straight at her.

"Well—only that out in Borneo I've got a rubber plantation that's part of my inheritance. No great affair, but the man who's always been in charge of it has just written home that he's getting old and wants a chance to retire. He's been faithful ever since my Unclestarted the plantation back in the boom of 1900. Do you feel like going out there and taking up his job? I should think you could have all you want of horses there."

She forced herself to look straight at him, and because her position was awkward, she showed her knowledge of that; and to him she was, in that moment, the great lady again.

"No-o!" he said slowly, and had drawn himself up stiffly as if it were hard work to throw away the thing that was offered. "I can't do that. It's charity, pure and simple! I know nothing of the work, and you know that I don't. It's charity, and I'd rather not take that from you."

But suddenly her awkwardness was gone. Suddenly she flamed round at him; and she was the high-spirited girl he had teased and

loved long years before.

"Charity—is it?" she said. "Well!—if you'd any backbone left I reckon you'd take charity and prove it wasn't by the way you dealt with it! That sort of pride is just cowardice under another name—and I wouldn't have believed you—"

"Stop that!" he said, and he was on his

feet, glaring at her. "You're right, maybe, it's cowardice and I'm a failure—but I won't be bullied by a woman! Come on, then—I take your dare. Give me a chance at this work in Borneo and call it anything you like!"

And she broke up his fury with the cheerful grin that was an absolute reminiscence of old days. And her voice was light as a feather as she went on:

"Oh, Terry! I did stick a pin in then, didn't I? You are simply splendid when you're teased!"

They laughed in concert, and she saw years of stiff weariness wiped from his face. When that was done she grew serious again.

"You know—you've made me feel desperately ashamed, Terry. After this I'm going to get out into the world and get busy with something or other. I'm positively moss-grown here; it's all wrong. When I think there are fellows like you—people's friends—— Anyway, my money's got to get busy and be useful." She was frowning thoughtfully, and her voice was grave and businesslike.

"Do you know," she went on again, "I've a good mind to come out to Borneo too, and see if things can't be developed out there, just for a beginning of—"

"No, you don't!" he said sharply, and he was glaring at her again. "I'm not going to have you out there making things smooth and easy for me! Take back your charity, if you really think I want mothering; if you imagine that's all I'm worth when I get a chance."

She looked up at him, absolutely startled by his violence; when she found her voice it was on a very mild tone.

"All right, Terry. I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to offend you. I suppose you'll accept the same salary as the man who's out there now—you've got to live, you know."

It sounded as if she begged for kindness, but he was still hard and judicial as he considered the point, then he gave his ultimatum:

"I'll take my passage money out from you, and my board and lodging while I'm learning the work. Then—well then, I'll either disappear or you shall pay me the same salary as the man who's doing the job now. How's that?"

"Is that all, Terry?" she said, still meekly; and his cheerful grin came again in answer.

"No!—it isn't! When I get going on my own, if I do, then I want a percentage on any



"Presently they found they were out in the hall again, standing under Antony Welling's portrait."

increased output that I can show. You've said the plantation isn't much of an affair—perhaps if I go at it hammer and tongs you'll find a difference. What about it—eh?"

"I seem to be at your mercy, Terry," she said, trying to answer his cheerfulness. Only there was a lump in her throat as she realised to the full what she had been able to do—with such wretched ease. "I suppose I shall have to agree to your terms. Perhaps you'd rather my solicitors arranged it all clearly—eh?"

"I'd like that—that's best," he agreed.
"Oh!—but there's one thing I'm going to beg
about." He was boyish again now. "It's
Tinto. He belongs to me—he's a devil, but
you might give him a home, will you?"

"Of course. He can come here and kick up his heels or make himself useful to the gardener if he wants to. I'll love to have him." She was eager and quick, and as the butler came solemnly out to announce lunch, she slipped a hand under Terry's shabby elbow.

That most perfect of butlers for once lost his poise when he found his mistress arm in arm with a down-at-heel stranger carrying, without apparent shame, a black eye. But Terry Nealda laughed and thrust out a hand to greet him.

"Why, the perfect Capston has forgotten me. I think that's rotten of you, Capston; though you did threaten to give me a hiding once because I locked you in the pantry just before a dinner-party and lost the key. At least I think it was this lady here who lost the key—Antony and I never thought of that priceless climax—"

But the old man, open-mouthed, was looking as if he wanted to hug him by this time, was feeling all up the arm from the hand he grasped with the nervous greedy hands of age. He exclaimed and hovered round them, and shepherded them into the wide oakpanelled and floored hall, and rushed away to tell the housekeeper the great news.

Terry stopped still in the middle of the welcoming place to stare about him, happily. Then he walked straight over to the stone fireplace where a wood fire burned always. High above the carved mantel hung a portrait of Antony Welling.

It was nothing like all the other dead and gone Wellings, stiffly posed and painted in oils, with classic scenes and pillars and curtains behind them, to show their greatness. This was one of those lightly touched in water-colour sketches that men had done for their "people," in very new khaki, and

with their Sam Browne unstained even by weather. In a good many houses they are the last of the line of family portraits.

"Good old Antony!" Terry said. He was very still there, and to the woman watching it seemed that his brown eyes with the tired wrinkles round them spoke some question to the blue eyes that looked down into them from the portrait.

Then he turned away and moved beside Marcia towards the open door of the diningroom. And very softly, almost as if he spoke to himself, he said:

"I'm so glad you married Antony, before he went out that last time. I can imagine how much it meant to him; he was such a quiet, steady-going fellow—it must have meant no end to him. I know how fond he was of you, always."

As they settled to their places at the table Marcia told herself fiercely that she ought to be pleased over this queer, quick happening that had broken into the monotony of her life. But yet somehow there was a wistful feeling deep in her that was perfectly reasonless—though it threatened to spoil her little festival.

But there was no shyness between them; in a minute they were back in the old days, chattering and laughing about the pranks and adventures into which two boys had dragged their faithful follower, the girl who was now the great lady, owning wide lands and wielding power.

Marcia tried to avoid silences, hurried in always with, "Do you remember——" But at last one came, and as she looked up at Terry, something in the way he was looking at her caught her breath from her throat, and she was left staring helplessly at him. He leant nearer across the corner of the table and said

"There's something surprising I've just remembered. Do you recollect when I got mixed up with the weeds down in the river there, and you got me out? Well, now you've done just the same——"

She broke in on him, rather breathlessly, it seemed, for his look was disturbing:

"Yes—but you'd gone in after me, you know. That was how it was!"

"That's true!—and I came across the river there, yesterday, just after you again—after the memory of you that was all I thought there was for me." He fell silent again there, in his own slow way, and her wistful eyes fell to a little packet she had laid on the table beside her when they sat down, and she put out her hand to it.

"Terry—when you promised to come today I got something ready for you—I thought you'd like something of Antony's. Just for

remembrance, you know."

"Yes—I'd like that no end!" he said, still in that slow, solid way of his, and with rather nervously shaking fingers Marcia held out to him a washleather pocket with a watch showing in the mouth of it.

"That was Antony's—it's rather fat and heavy—but he prized it because it had come to him as a sort of heirloom. And I know he'd like you to have it, Terry. There's no

one else has so good a right to it."

He was still leaning forward to her, and his hand closed on hers and on the watch.

"That's splendid!—but there's something else of Tony's that I want, more than this watch," he said.

Her wistfulness was gone, the eyes she raised to his were perfectly steady.

"Meaning me?" she said, and he nodded.

"Meaning just you. Am I to get Tony's

"Meaning just you. Am I to get Tony's biggest possession some day—when I deserve it?" But he drew back and his lips tightened, for she had shaken her head slowly. "No good—eh? Well—it was too much, of course. But it's your fault—why, I've even forgotten my bruised face—till now," he said, quietly. And he moved to take his hand from hers, only her fingers slipped about his and held tightly.

"No!—no, Terry, you don't understand! I only meant that I didn't belong to Antony, I've never felt like that. Oh!—I was glad and proud to marry him, I was so fond of him, but I never felt I belonged to him, though I prayed, hard, when he first went, that I might bear a child to him—"

"Suppose I'd been here, then, Marcia, what

would have happened?"

"I don't know," she said helplessly. "I think perhaps I should have refused to marry either of you. No!—that's not right," she

said, and she was thoughtfully playing with the watch that lay under both their hands. "I should have married Antony, after all, I think, because you wouldn't need me so much as he did. You could get along without me or any other woman."

"I haven't got along with much effect," he said. "I'm a pretty average failure in life

up to now."

Her fingers crept over his again.

"Not so much of a failure, Terry, when you could refuse a good opportunity because you

thought it was charity."

"Ōh!—it wasn't that so much," he told her roughly. "It was because it came from you that it stung. I wanted so much more than charity."

She got up from her chair and came close to him, and he waited, hungrily watching, but quite still.

She bent over him and her soft lips touched

his bruised eye.

"That is for Tinto's sake," she said, and felt how he was trembling. Then those soft lips fluttered to rest again on his, but he heard her whisper—"And this is for my own."

PRESENTLY they found they were out in the hall again, standing under Antony Welling's portrait. Terry's arm was about his woman, though they knew they were there to keep their old grouping with Antony Welling.

"Now you've promised not to come mothering me when I go out to Borneo," Terry said fiercely. "Don't you dare to

back out of that promise, now!"

"No, Terry—I won't," she said meekly.

"But will you promise to come out in a year's time and see what I've done—for you and Tony? Will you promise that?"

"Y-yes, Terry—I promise that," she said, and he had to grin in his own way at the eagerness of her.

FAITH.

EAVE me my faith in beauty. Take from me All else in this wide world that I hold dear: Power and riches and nobility,
The ostentatious trappings I revere,
Ambition take from me and rarer fame,
Fine raiment and the friendship of the great,
Take honour too, leave me without a name,
Yet will you then not leave me desolate.
For while my faith in beauty still is left,
Beauty of body and of mind and soul,
Though of all else existence is bereft,
The treasuries of Heaven I control.
Take all from me, but let my faith not dim;
My faith in beauty is my faith in Him.

K.

MR. PONDLEBERRY RIDES FOR HIS BUTTON

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT HOLIDAY

R. PONDLEBERRY stepped out of his two-thousand-guinea car, removed his capacious fur coat, adjusted his hat-guard, and looked about for his horse. He spied the latter, a fine, slashing, weight-carrying grey, that would jump anything, and was so docile a child could have ridden him—a patent safety, in fact, for which Mr. Pondleberry had paid proportionately. He signalled to the groom to bring the horse up.

Having hoisted Mr. Pondleberry into the saddle, and assured him that his second horseman had his sandwiches and flask, the groom took his place beside the chauffeur, and the car returned to Hall Court until such time as Mr. Pondleberry should telephone for it to come and fetch him. From all of which it may be gathered that Mr. Pondleberry hunted in comfort.

Gripping his heavy, silver-mounted riding whip, and frequently admonishing his horse to WOA!—the horse was stepping with that feeling of light, airy well-being that a hunter full of the best oats should have, but was far too well-mannered ever to shy at anything—Mr. Pondleberry made his way down the lane to the open space where hounds and followers were gathered.

He endeavoured, as they say in stageland, to make his "entrance" as effective as possible, nodding to this man, raising his glossily shining hat to a lady, and taking it off with a superb flourish when he came to the Master. The Master returned his greeting civilly enough, but the Master's wife, seeing Mr. Pondleberry was about to come up and talk to her, gave him an icy nod and wheeled her horse towards three young

gentlemen in pink, with whom she entered into conversation.

These three were Lieutenants Brown, Jones, and Blake—young jackanapes, thought Mr. Pondleberry indignantly, as he heard their ribald laughter and knew himself to be the subject of it.

"'Ounds ought to show an 'unt to-day," Mr. Pondleberry remarked to a gentleman with an aquiline nose, white moustache, wearing the blue-velvet collar and gilt buttons of the Lodden Hunt.

"I trust they will." Sir Livingstone Glayre turned his horse slightly away and looked in the opposite direction.

"Stuck-up old stick!" was Mr. Pondleberry's reflection at the clear hint that Sir Livingstone Glayre had no wish to converse with him.

He approached another blue-collared, giltbuttoned member of the Lodden Hunt. "Mornin', Colonel, 'ow's old Bellows-tomend?"

Mr. Pondleberry prodded the flanks of the Colonel's fat and gone-in-the-wind black horse, who laid one ear back and lifted his near hind leg three inches from the ground.

"Mind, sir! Mind!" said the Colonel indignantly, catching the black short by the head, and moving away. "This horse kicks."

Rebuffed again, Mr. Pondleberry looked about for someone with whom to pass the time of day. All around groups were chatting familiarly, calling each other by their Christian names, cracking jokes; but none looked in the direction of Mr. Pondleberry.

The fact of the matter was, when he came



"The Master's wife, seeing Mr. Pondleberry was about to come up and talk to her, gave him an icy nod and wheeled her horse towards three young gentlemen."

down to the Lodden country to hunt, Mr. Pondleberry chose the wrong part of the world.

Everyone knew who he was, of course. Who didn't know Waldo Pondleberry, financier, proprietor of theatres, racehorse-owner! But why must he come down to the Lodden country? He could have gone to Melton, to Grantham, to Rugby, to half a dozen first-class centres. His subscription would have been gladly accepted, and he would have been treated with reasonable civility by all and by many with respect. But in the Lodden country, that last fortress of the old regime, he was not wanted.

The Lodden lies in the West of England. a little below the galloping shire lands, a little above such sporting provincial countries as the Worcestershire, the V.W.H. and Vine. In character it is somewhat between the two; followers get a bit of everything, timber, walls, fly fences and banks. There is plenty of grass, though the enclosures are rather small; there are plenty of foxes, and -most important—there is generally plenty of sport. For you have to hand them that; they may be rather snobs down in the Lodden; they may not have the great raking grass fields, over which hounds can race as they do in Leicestershire; but everyone connected with the hunt-from the young Marquis and present Master to the ancient terrier man-has one idea in his head-to show sport.

It is a funny little community tucked away there in this fair corner of the West: there are some of the landed gentry, alas, growing so few now in other parts, but in the Lodden country still clinging to their homes and glorying in preserving foxes; there are others, retired soldiers and impecunious members of the aristocracy living in what are little more than cottages in villages round the great park that encircles Lodden Hall: and there is the Marquis himself, and his Marchioness, as handsome a young couple as could be seen, who are universally loved and respected. Hounds have been in the family for five generations, the young Marquis succeeding to the Mastership on his father's death two years ago.

There is no wish to labour the point of the snobbishness of this flower of an old English country life; but to understand the position of Waldo Pondleberry as a new arrival it cannot be made too clear. They did not want such as he down there; they did not wish the place to become a centre for people to dash down to from London, wealthy

folk who would take houses for the season, and go away again without caring twopence for the real life of the countryside. They wanted the Lodden country to maintain its own character—a place where neighbours, sons and nephews, soldiers on leave, sporting farmers, could all amicably follow the sport of fox-hunting.

Though Pondleberry had been owner of Hall Court six months, no one had invited him to dinner, asked him to shoot on non-hunting days, or called on him. He had not been sent the button that would make him a member of the hunt club and entitle him to wear the blue velvet collar.

Sitting there on his big grey horse, Pondleberry surveyed all those blue velvet collars, and felt rather lonely and just a little sad.

If only he could get the Master to send him that button!

It was such a little thing to want; just a plain gilt button, with the initials L.H. But it meant a lot. It would entitle Pondleberry to wear the hunt coat, and make him a member of the Lodden Hunt Club; it would set him once and for all on a footing of equality with these supercilious county folk, who seemed to think it a condescension to say good morning to him.

Why shouldn't he have it? He sent as large a subscription as anyone; he hunted regularly; others, who had arrived in the neighbourhood after he had, had been sent it. Yet there he was, still condemned to the conspicuousness of a plain coat and plain buttons, when all the others were uniform or hunted as farmers in ratcatcher.

He would cheerfully have given one of his theatres for that button, or his position as managing director of those new oil-fields; he would have given anything, in short, and he just couldn't get it.

Out of the whole field Mr. Pondleberry had one true friend. This was the Reverend Josiah Wells, the parson. The Rev. Josiah was a Christian and a sportsman; he saw the best side of all men and hunted four days a week.

Spying his friend, Pondleberry rode up to him. He was determined to thrash out once and for all the question of the button.

"How does a chap get this button?" he asked in his abrupt way after they had exchanged greetings.

"What button?"

"The hunt button; like you've got on your black coat there and the other chaps wear on their pink coats. I've been down here six months. I'm a covert-owner; I've

paid my subscription; subscribed to the wire fund, the poultry fund, the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society; but the button has never been sent to me.'

The Rev. Josiah reflected; he appreciated the delicacy of the situation, and did not

wish to hurt Pondleberry's feelings.

"It is entirely a private matter for Lord Lodden. He is the Master of these hounds. and he sends the button as he thinks fit, generally after people have been here some little while."

"But there are some who've got it since I came; that young Jeffreys, I see he is out in pink to-day."

He's a very good man to hounds." "Does that make any difference?"

The Rev. Josiah was about to say, "All the difference; the Master will always give the button to a man he thinks a sportsman." But he checked himself. Poor old Pondleberry, with his carefully chosen horses, car to take him to and from the meet, cautious riding, was not much of a sportsman.

Instead, the Rev. Josiah tried to explain

his meaning diplomatically.

"Lord Lodden, you know, will always give the button as a little token of his esteem. For example, young Jeffreys was first up in that big hunt they had the other day; it was after that he sent it to him."

"I see," said Pondleberry, who appeared

to be reflecting deeply.

When hounds moved off there was a new glint in Pondleberry's eye, a glint that those who knew Waldo Pondleberry, the financier, had learnt to respect; it signified that he

was going to do something.

Hitherto he had hunted, as many other excellent fellows have done and do, chiefly for the sake of his health. He had always been fond of hounds, and as a small boy often played truant from the colliers' village school to go to a meet; but it was only when success came to him in middle life that he was able to afford horses.

In middle life Pondleberry had grown fat and podgy, with puffy, pink, City man's cheeks. He had no doubt that the wholesome exercise of hunting would do him a vast amount of good; but his business interests were many, and he had no wish to let a broken arm or collar-bone interfere with his giving them his personal attention, nor, it must be said, had he any wish to break his arm. In fact, Mr. Pondleberry had a perfect horror of falling off his horse. However, somewhere in that plump, cautious body

there still lurked the spark that had fired the imagination of the boy in the colliery village at the sight of hounds. Pondleberry was at heart a sportsman.

The wind was towards them as the hunt crossed the field to the first draw. Lieutenants Brown, Jones, and Blake were immediately in front of Mr. Pondleberry. He disliked these young subalterns, from a neighbouring cavalry barracks, most cordially; their attitude towards him was one of thinly veiled impertinence. He overheard their talk now.

"I'll bet you a pint of pop," said Lieutenant Blake, "old Pondleberry doesn't jump anything to-day."

"No, thanks; that's too safe; think of something else."

"Well, I'll bet you he goes home as soon

as he has finished his flask."

"All right, I'll take that; but if hounds run we shan't know, for we shall never see him again, anyway."

"Won't you see me again, you young beauties!" thought Pondleberry indig-"You'll see too much of me before I've done. I'll jump on every mother's limb of ye if you get in my way.'

At this moment a far-away "holloa" floated down from the bottom corner of the wood. Distant but clear, it came like music to the waiting field. Reynard had broken covert.

Hounds were still in covert, and the exceedingly well-behaved Lodden field waited the field master's signal to go through a gate in the mouth of which the three young cavalry subalterns had already taken up positions of advantage.

Pondleberry did not wait. Catching his horse short by the head, he gave him a thump with his whip, and charged at the open gateway, knocking Lieutenants Jones and Brown to right and left, and all but overturning Lieutenant Blake.

"Hold hard, sir! Where

going?" yelled the field master.

"Snakes alive! It's old Pondleberry!" gasped Lieutenant Brown, rubbing a thigh that had received a severe blow from Pondleberry's knee.

"His horse must have bolted!" said Lieutenant Blake. "Lor'! I thought I'd

been charged by an elephant."

"Hold hard, sir! Oh, don't cross the line!" screamed the field master almost tearfully, as Mr. Pondleberry proceeded to do this very thing.

Hounds were now well away, and the field

galloped after them. Pondleberry had a capital start, and, superbly mounted as he was, succeeded in keeping it. In the very next field Lieutenant Blake would have lost his bet about Mr. Pondleberry taking a jump that day. At the far end of the field there were a post and rails, green and formidable to look at. Pondleberry hated timber, and would wait all day for someone to break the top rail for him before he'd put his horse at it. But now—though his heart was in his mouth—he charged those rails in true Balaclava style, and cleared them, just managing to remain in the saddle with the aid of the horse's ear.

The jump proved unfortunate, for hounds swung left-handed, and Pondleberry found

himself temporarily thrown out.

He came up with the field at a muddy ford. The Master's wife was just crossing the ford, the others giving her room so that she should not be splashed. Pondleberry saw his chance; digging his spurs into the grey, he skirted the waiting crowd, and galloped into the ford, sending a perfect fountain of mud all over the Marchioness of Lodden.

By this means he got in front again. He also, however, drew upon himself the attention of Lieutenants Brown, Jones, and Blake—all the sworn servants of the pretty young Marchioness, and jealous as cats of anyone who rode in front of them. The episode of the gate they would have excused on the ground that Pondleberry could not hold his horse. But to steal a march on those waiting at a ford, and to smother the Master's wife with mud in doing it, was another matter.

Each eyed the broad back of Pondleberry and decided that the ill-mannered thruster must be taught a lesson.

Worse was to follow. Hounds had hit off the line again, but scent seemed none too good and progress was slow. The wellmannered field were, as usual, giving hounds plenty of room; but Pondleberry, a little in advance of the others, was secretly fuming with impatience. In front there was a blackish-looking fence, in which he had already marked down for himself a place that looked a little less thick than the rest. When hounds went on he must get to that place before anyone else.

He had not long to wait. A couple of hounds in advance of the others got on good terms with scent again, gave joyful tongue and raced forward. Behind, an eager field kept their horses in check, for all could see

hounds were still much strung out. Pondleberry, however, only noticed the leading hounds, and that they were running. So he collected the grey and sent him thundering at the weak place in the fence. First over, first served, was Mr. Pondleberry's motto that day.

Intent on the obstacle, he did not see a lagging hound running beside him. The rest of the field did. They saw all too plainly that the hound was going to get through the fence at the same place as Pondleberry.

"Ware hound, sir," called the second

whip.

"Hold hard!" yelled the field master.

"Oh, look at that hound. He'll jump on it!" cried the Marchioness.

Never was prophecy more truly uttered. The hound, wriggling in front of Pondleberry in the suicidal way a good hound intent on his fox will always do, leapt into the weak part of the fence.

Pondleberry saw the hound; he heard the agonised cries behind him, but too late. The grey was already in the air, and down he

came on top of the hound.

There was a fearsome yelp. The field master went white with rage. The Marchioness put her hand in front of her face and almost sobbed out, "Oh, that dreadful man!" The second whip looked as though he had just heard of the death of his firstborn. The whole field was aghast, for to jump on a hound was entirely unforgivable. Pondleberry's chance of ever getting the button went out to a thousand to one. And then the hound miraculously got up and went on his way unhurt.

However, Pondleberry was now a marked

"All right! We'll attend to him," Lieutenants Brown and Blake assured the Marchioness, who was looking round wildly and asking if no one could make that awful man go home.

Mr. Pondleberry was now in for what is known as a rough ride. He had bumped the young gentlemen at a gate; he had splattered the Master's wife with mud; he had jumped on a hound. He had earned anything that was coming to him.

Lieutenants Brown and Blake had done a bit of steeplechasing—in Ireland too. They settled down to look after Pondleberry. He was putting the grey, in whose jumping powers he had now the utmost confidence, at a stake and bound, when he had a sensation as of a thunderstorm overtaking him from the rear, and the two subalterns closed in on either side. Knee to knee the three took the fence. Pondleberry, in the middle, got a severe jostling, and the grey only just managed to keep his legs.

"Mind where you are going," he remon-

strated.

Neither took the slightest notice, and it seemed to Pondleberry that they closed in on him again on purpose before they came to the next fence. He wanted no more jumps like the last; his hands tightened on the reins, a signal to the perfectly schooled grey that master wasn't very keen on the next fence. Accordingly the grey, just before the fence, put all four feet in the ground and slithered gently to a halt, leaving the two subalterns both leaning inwards to collide in mid-air and land in the next field head over heels.

"Serve you right!" shouted Pondleberry, as he scrambled through the fence and

galloped almost over them.

The Marchioness had one knight-errant left, Lieutenant Jones, whose experience of steeplechasing was even greater than his comrades'! He was riding a fast little thoroughbred, and he could not afford to bump that enormous grey; but he knew a useful thing or two, did Lieutenant Jones.

A silvery brook lay ahead. Pondleberry, remembering the old adage, "take water fast," was pounding down at it with a right good will, when he was again conscious of a cyclone approaching. It was Lieutenant Jones coming up on his thoroughbred as fast as he could gallop. He did not actually cross Mr. Pondleberry, that is to say a steeplechase rider who kept his nerve would have seen the other had just room to pass in front of him without a collision. But Pondleberry was no steeplechase rider; he thought a collision inevitable, and he did exactly what Lieutenant Jones intended him to do. He pulled hard on his right rein, with the result that the grey took the brook aslant and landed fairly and squarely in the middle.

Spitting out mud and water, Pondleberry scrambled to the bank. He had lost his place and he had lost his temper; but he had not lost hope yet of that button. He remounted and continued the chase. It was now he began to realise that when he gave five hundred for the grey he got a bargain. Never was man mounted in a manner to give him a better chance of seeing out a great hunt. For it had turned

into a great hunt now; the scent was tearing, and hounds were running to it nearly mute.

The rest of the field, less well mounted than Pondleberry on his splendid grey or Lieutenant Jones on his little long-tailed thoroughbred, were spread out over miles of country. The huntsman had fallen; the first whipper-in had been thrown out by a wall. The Master alone was with hounds. But just behind him Pondleberry could see Lieutenant Jones. The sight made him grind his teeth. Not only had Lieutenant Jones served him a scurvy trick at that brook, but profiting by it he would now be the first man up when hounds killed, and Pondleberry would be deprived of his button, which he felt the Master must surely have given him otherwise.

Fury and envy in his heart, Pondleberry pounded along. Presently he came abreast the Master. The young Marquis, who had never before seen his unwelcome subscriber so far in front when hounds were running, looked at him amazed.

Pondleberry observed the Master's horse was nearly through and, though it wrenched

his heart, offered him the grey.

"No, carry on," said his lordship. "I'll not take your horse; you've earned the right to see the end of this. By George, you will too!" he shouted excitedly. "They've run into view. Yonder he goes! Yoicks! Get into him, my beauties!"

Looking forward, Pondleberry could just see Reynard two fields ahead, hounds close behind. The sight thrilled him as no sight had ever thrilled him before. But he also saw, and this was less agreeable, the scarlet-coated back of Lieutenant Jones.

The fellow would get there first! And after the dirty trick he had played. No, might he be boiled if he let him! thought Pondleberry, and called on the grey for a final effort.

The grey responded nobly. They were crossing a broad sweep of pasture. Yard by yard the grey gained on the little thoroughbred. Pondleberry's heart began to exult within him. The thoroughbred had had enough. He'd get there first. He'd be the first man up. Already he pictured himself leaping from his horse, snatching the fox from the jaws of hounds, and standing in their midst holding Reynard high above his head. A great moment. Except for an occasional fox chopped outside covert, Pondleberry had never had the good fortune to see a kill.



It was in the midst of these exultant thoughts that Lieutenant Jones looked round and grinned—yes, actually grinned at Pondleberry, then called on his gallant little thoroughbred.

The thoroughbred had a pretty turn of speed if things came to a close finish. To his unutterable dismay, just when he thought all was won, Pondleberry found himself being left behind.

He did not see red; he saw the whole Aurora Borealis. He always thought after-

wards he must have temporarily gone mad. Anyway, standing out above everything else he saw the thoroughbred's perfectly pulled, long and glossy tail. He leant forward and he caught that tail.

The thoroughbred kicked out as he galloped, the grey swerved sharply, and one of the oldest tricks commonly practised by cowboys upon cattle happened automatically. The little thoroughbred was suddenly jerked off his balance and came head over heels.

"That'll teach you to ride me into rivers," shouted Pondleberry to his rival on the

ground.

That is exactly what happened. Lord Lodden, who saw the whole episode, will vouch for it to this day, and still laughs uncontrollably as he describes how Mr. Pondleberry, seeing himself in danger of losing that coveted first place, caught hold of the tail of his rival's horse and pulled him head over heels.

wavy brush dubiously. It was not what he wanted, he wanted that button. However, realising that the Master was offering him an honour, he accepted the trophy. For once he did not telephone for his car, but rode home, choosing a way that would lead by as many villages as possible, through which he swaggered, the brush conspicuously fastened to his saddle.

The next morning, in his mail, there was a registered letter. This he opened first, and



When the Master got up he found Pondleberry in the middle of the pack, struggling to rescue what was left of the fox from the hounds. In turn he rescued Pondleberry and, after congratulating him on the way he had ridden, handed him the brush.

Mr. Pondleberry looked at Reynard's

there fell out on his plate a bright gilt button on which the letters L.H. were engraved.

Mr. Pondleberry did not go to his office that day; he spent the greater part of it being measured for the uniform of the Lodden Hunt.

BIGBUSINESS

Louis J. McQuilland Caricatures by RAPHAEL NELSON

DOETS and artists will laugh heartily at the idea of "Big Business" being the hope of the world; but one man of genius has put it on solemn record that it does lie with the modern kings and emperors who rule the domains of finance, commerce, transport, food, and all the considered necessities of life to ensure and broaden Civilisation.

"It is only," declares Mr. H. G. Wells in a fine burst of confidence, "through a conscious, frank and world-wide co-operation of the man of science, the scientific worker, the man accustomed to the direction of productive industry, the man able to control the arterial supply of credit, the man who can control newspapers and politicians, that the great system of changes they have almost inadvertently got going can be brought to any hopeful order of development. Such men, whether they mean to be or not, are the actual revolutionaries of our world."

All cartoonists, Raphael Nelson included, look upon famous men as serious jokes; and, perhaps, that is not the worst way of regarding a representative collection of beings who figure very prominently indeed in the life of to-day.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Melchett was born in Lancashire (strange to say), educated at Cheltenham, St. John's College, Cambridge, and at Edinburgh University. He entered the world as plain Moritz Mond, son of a fairly famous father, Dr. Ludwig Mond. After college days when he was called to the Bar he practised a little, and then decided to make big money by taking an active interest in the formidable firm, Brunner, Mond & Co., whose chemical ramifications run through the world.

That famous company was one of the

main elements in the great merger which comprises also Nobel Industries, United Alkali and the British Dyestuffs Corporation, with their numerous associated and constituent companies. Of this vast combine, with its initial £65,000,000 capital, Lord Melchett is Chairman. There was considerable matter for jest when it was rumoured that an object of the company was to extract all useful chemical matters from the Dead Sea; but the company has effected greater miracles than that. It has a world-power.

What kind of man is it who presides over this leviathan? Even his bitterest enemies admit that Lord Melchett has business genius. He has immense inside experience of British Industry, and his knowledge of the trend of commercial policy and organisation is amazing—some folk say, alarming. He has been described by his friends as the Apostle of Rationalisation in his Country. His main genius has been, however, directed to the organisation and consolidation of the various industries with which he has been most intimately connected.

It was on the outbreak of the Great War that Lord Melchett's extreme faculty for business on the larger scale was first fully recognised, when he was invited by Mr. Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to join the small Finance Committee of big business men whose advice he needed in dealing with the menace of whole-sale economic deadlock created by the sudden world crisis.

Lord Melchett's firms furnished threequarters of the entire supply of nitrate of ammonia, one of the many ingredients of war explosives, besides glycerine and cordite, gas masks and nickel.

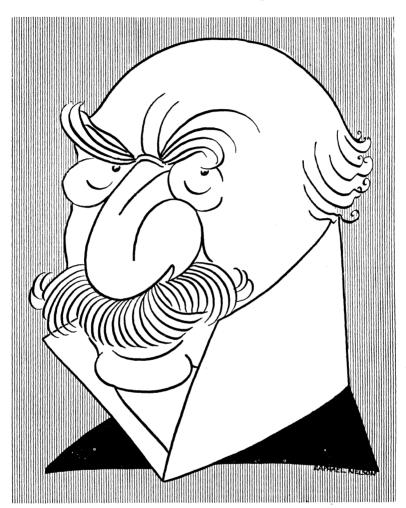
He has an assured manner, an enormously

genial smile, and is almost as difficult to better in argument as in a bargain. Quite a number of Liberals, however, were pleased when he joined the Conservative Party—and quite a number of Unionists displeased.

Another politician, who escaped from the House of Commons but without seeking the forgetfulness of the Lords, was Mr. Reginald

of his friend Asquith, and with him fought Joseph Chamberlain when he launched Tariff Reform on a sceptical England.

Under the regimes of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith, Mr. McKenna was Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Minister for Education. He became, in turn, responsible for the Home Office and

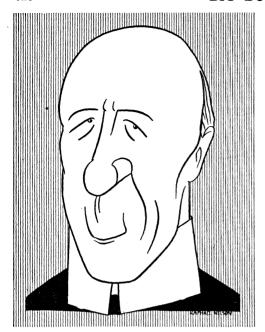


LORD MELCHETT.

McKenna, whose influence in the City grows stronger year by year and who floated the greatest loan on record. Like Lord Melchett, Mr. McKenna was a Cambridge man. He concentrated on mathematics and rowing; he was bow in the Cambridge Boat in 1887. Like Lord Melchett also, he began life as a barrister and entered the House of Commons as a devoted adherent of Charles Dilke. He shared afterwards the fortunes

the Admiralty. At the Admiralty lucky Reginald was highly popular as a believer in big Estimates. On the formation of the Lloyd-George Coalition Mr. McKenna left politics in disgust because of the treatment of his friend Mr. Asquith, afterwards Lord Oxford. He was strongly urged to come back by Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Baldwin, but smilingly declined.

Mr. McKenna is much more at home in



MR. REGINALD MCKENNA.

the City as Chairman of the Midland Bank, the greatest banking organisation in the world.

Lord Birkenhead has said of him: "So large a measure of achievement can only be explained by the possession of remarkable qualities. I should suppose that Mr. Mc-Kenna's strongest points are a very orderly, clear and well-arranged mind, immense industry and an intuitive logical faculty."

Responsibilities have not burdened him nor success spoiled him. Incidentally, he is one of the best bridge players in London.

A mighty man in shipping and the East is Lord Inchcape. At the age of eight the future shipping peer was taken on a voyage to Archangel and back to Kirkcaldy in a barque of 300 tons, the Asia. "Twice I managed to fall overboard into the Dwina," he recalls. "The first time I was rescued by a Russian boy, the second time by the ship's cook. If the cook had not caught me by the scruff of the neck when I was going down for the third time, I should have missed a long and delightful life."

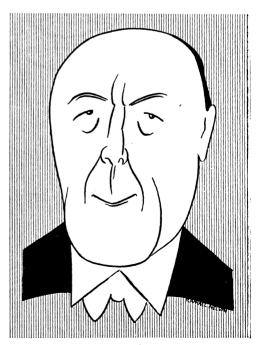
When young James Lyle Mackay, of Arbroath, went out to India as clerk to the firm of McKinnon, McKenzie and Co., of Calcutta, it was with the emphatic intention of making his fortune. You cannot keep young Scotsmen off that mark. Within a year the youth had established himself. Nine years after the day he entered the firm

he became a partner. Six years later he was elected Chairman of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. Before forty he sat in that august body, the Bengal Legislative Council. He became a knight and a baronet and was created Baron Inchcape of Strathnaver in 1911. His Viscounty came in 1924. His romantic title was chosen from the famous Inchcape Rock, near which he was born.

Lord Inchcape is head of the greatest chain of vessels in the world in his chairmanship of the amalgamated P. & O. and British India Co. At the height of his activities he found time to write a weekly letter to each of his commanders abroad. He had hundreds of captains under his control, each of whom he knows personally and

particularly.

After the Great War the British Government found itself in possession of an immense fleet of merchant ships which had been bought to replace the losses caused by the German submarine campaign. Lord Inchcape, convinced that this huge fleet could not be economically run by the Government, arranged to take it over. Close on two hundred steamers, valued at £38,000,000, came into his hands. Within a year he had arranged for their sale to existing shipowners without taking any profit for himself. For this service, known as the "Inchcape Deal," he was awarded the rank of Honorary Cap-



LORD INCHCAPE.

tain in the Royal Naval Reserve—and the Navy was confident he had been treated with distinguished consideration.

He is as much a diplomatist as a master of shipping. Successive Governments have enlisted the expert aid, as Eastern adviser, of "Inchcape of India." In his seventieth year he went back to that country to preside over the Economy Committee.

So recently as 1927 his lordship raised a storm among the godly by declaring "missionaries in China do more harm than good and are largely responsible for unrest by disturbing the faith of the people."

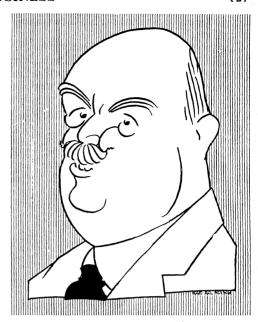
Like all self-made emperors, Lord Inchcape is a bit arbitrary. In a life of triumphant achievement there has been tragedy. The Elsie Mackay Fund is a sad memorial to his high-spirited daughter, who lost her life in an attempt to fly the Atlantic with Captain Hinchcliffe.

Another Scot (of Irish admixture) is Sir Thomas Lipton, who has knowledge of the East only through his great tea plantations.

He began life much more frugally than even James Lyle Mackay. He and his parents were lamentably poor. His first wage on leaving an elementary school was half a crown a week, later raised to four shillings. Finding that the old country did not seem disposed to rate his boyish services any higher, he set out for America as a stowaway.



SIR THOMAS LIPTON.



SIR WOODMAN BURBIDGE.

Before going on that desperate enterprise, he had given words of filial assurance to his mother. "Some day," he said to her, "I'll buy you a fine silk dress and a carriage, and you can sit in it like a great lady. And you'll have a bonny house and servants too. Just you wait till I'm a man working and you'll see."

The old woman had not long to wait. At twenty-nine her boy, Tommy, was a millionaire. After some years of hardship in America, at a store in New Orleans, and in the rice swamps of Carolina, young Lipton had saved enough to go home and start that little business which was to give his mother all that he had promised her, and more.

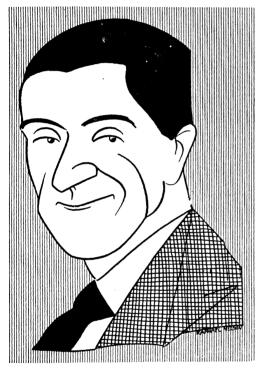
Starting a small provision shop in Glasgow, he worked fourteen hours a day and slept under his counter. Ten years later he was employing 8,000 men. Having established himself in Scotland, like Alexander and Bonnie Leslie, he crossed the borders to spread his conquests further, from Carlisle to Cornwall.

From America for his business he bought hogs by the hundred thousand and immense quantities of butter from Denmark. He purchased big tea-gardens in Ceylon. He built for that business paper and printing shops, soap works, ham and bacon factories—all on a great scale.

As he made from the people, he gave back to them. To the Alexandra Trust for the erection of cheap restaurants he donated £100,000, and he is noted for his benevolence to children.

Having worked so hard in early life, Sir Thomas began to enjoy himself in middle age, notably as a yachtsman. Not even the repeated failure of the *Shamrock* to win the America Cup has yet, however, succeeded in promoting entire good feeling between the United States and England.

Sir Thomas Lipton (created a knight in 1898, and a baronet in 1909) was a great personal friend of Queen Alexandra and King Edward. The latter as Prince of Wales



SIR WILLIAM MORRIS.

welcomed Big Business into his circle of intimates.

Sir Woodman Burbidge is a kind of monarch of the drapery trade as Chairman and Managing Director of the great firm of Harrods. His favourite saying is: "The function of trade is to distribute the greatest quantity of goods over the greatest possible area." His pet slogan is: "Buy, buy, buy again." It is a dictum of his that girls who work seriously prefer to wear dark dresses. With regard to business premises he believes that skyscrapers are absolutely inevitable.

Harrods have great factories and stores in the Argentine and Chili, territories about which Sir Woodman is very enthusiastic. On his last big trip to South America he covered 20,000 miles, crossing the Andes on a pack-mule. If he were a young man, he declares, he would rather make his career in the Argentine Republic than in any other country.

Sir Woodman Burbidge is an immense favourite with the army of employees in Harrods: he is a commercial idealist. His chief hobby is running this great business. Next to this he is fond of running dogs. He has a kennel of fine greyhounds and hopes one day to win the Waterloo Cup.

Another emperor of haberdashery is Mr. Gordon Selfridge. In H. G. Wells's very personal work, The World of William Clissold, where William and his brother, Dickon, are twin versions of Wells himself, the famous novelist writes: "My brother has a great admiration for Mr. Selfridge, and I have been privileged to meet him, an unobtrusive man with something of the shy quiet of a poet. My brother compares him to Mozart on account of his interest and variety."

Strange to say, this is not irony, but Wells in a fit of inexplicable enthusiasm. Mr. Selfridge is, of course, not quite the angelic modest genius indicated, as Wells himself betrays in the sentence that follows: "He makes some of the older advertisers sound like the village idiot at a fair beating a pan."

There are times, it is said, when Mr. Selfridge is a snapping terror to all around him in the business world. At other periods—and these are worse—he has all the sanctimony of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in his self-righteous hours.

Mr. Selfridge has so long been an English institution that it is well to recall he came here in 1909, after spending twenty-four years with the huge store of Marshall Field in Chicago, where he had the control of 10,000 assistants. For the first couple of years it appeared that Mr. Selfridge was not going to succeed in his new store in Oxford Street, but gradually he prevailed and made American methods conquer.

Selfridge began life as a bank clerk and he studied law. "When I was twelve," he recalls of an early incursion into commerce, "a friend and I started an amateur newspaper. My friend supervised the editorial side. I solicited the advertisements. I sold one to the village dentist. I had great difficulty in collecting my account, and I decided the only way was to take it in kind, so I had a perfectly sound tooth extracted."

If I started life again, I should try to make good as a journalist."

Mr. Selfridge's three recreations are work,

the theatre, and prize-fights.

Sir W. R. Morris, inventor of the Morris Oxford and the Morris Cowley, is racy of the English soil, and is the wizard of the British than anyone else"; and he began his manufacture of bicycles with a capital of £5. In six years he had saved £2,000 and worked up a small garage business. In 1900 he built his first motor-cycle. Eleven years later he perfected his first motor-car.

In 1926 he floated Morris Motors Ltd., with



MR. GORDON SELFRIDGE.

motor trade. Shy, nervous-looking, and unimpressive, he is a mechanical genius with a certain aptitude for finance.

Fifty-two years ago he was born in Worcester and was educated in Cowley village school. His father drove a coach in London.

At the age of seventeen he said to himself, "W. R. Morris will pay me a higher salary

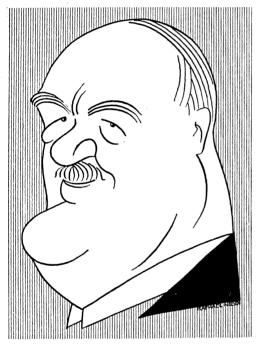
a capital of £5,000,000. In 1928 he gave back to the firm £725,000 due to him as the only ordinary shareholder. This year he has put back a million.

He has placed 350,000 cars on the road since he made his first Morris. "If the same energy," he declares, "was put into our daily work as we display in football, tennis and

golf, we should not be long making up our deplorable trade arrears."

Sir William is regarded with reverence by his employees. They share in all his enterprises. He looks forward—and not entirely self-interestedly—to a time when it will become a recognised thing for a British working man to have his own car.

He thinks men make a mistake in pampering their sons and providing for them in a way that may preclude them from working. "The least valuable thing," he holds, "that a parent can endow an ordinary strong and healthy son with is money. Counsel, cor-



LORD ROTHERMERE.

rection and example should count for far more in equipping him for the battle of life."

Morris never took a holiday until late years, and his health suffered in consequence. He has recently taken up golf, tennis and squash rackets, but is much more interested in the "Morris Seven."

The newspaper peers are men of immense power in England to-day. The Right Hon. Harold Sidney, Baron Rothermere, came to fortune hand in hand with his brother, the late Lord Northcliffe. Their father was a not too successful Dublin barrister. The story of Answers, Alfred Northcliffe's first successful paper, is too well known to bear repe-

tition. In all Alfred's adventures Harold was with him on the business side.

When the Daily Mirror failed as a woman's paper, Lord Rothermere turned it into a picture paper and made a fortune out of it. He established another fortune in 1915 in the Sunday Pictorial. He succeeded his brilliant brother in the control of the Daily Mail. Lord Rothermere is scarcely ever seen inside the offices of his newspapers; he prefers to direct them from outside. He has always managed the finance while his brother planned the policy of the Northcliffe journals.

Lord Rothermere is one of the very wealthiest men in England. Only a portion of his great fortune lies in his newspapers. He has immense industrial interests all over the world, and especially in Newfoundland.

Romantic as the idea may seem, Lord Rothermere would have little difficulty in becoming King or Emperor of Hungary, with his son as Prince Imperial. He has helped that country much with money and with propaganda. He received a memorial from the Hungarian nation two years ago subscribed to by every town and village in that country, for his "generous, manly, championship of Hungary's rights." When his son, the Hon. Esmond Harmsworth, went there to receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law as proxy for his father, bouquets were rained down from aeroplanes on him, and cheering hundreds ran by his carriage.

Lord Rothermere is interested in the liberal arts. He founded the Edward VII Chair of English Literature at Cambridge.

He is a man without any snobbish ambitions. He is said to have accepted a peerage simply for the sake of his boys—two of whom he lost in the Great War.

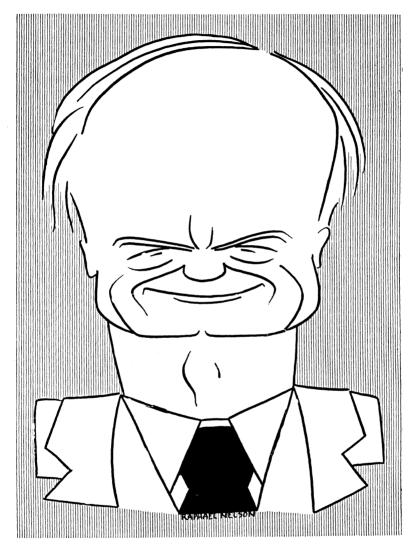
He has a hearty antagonism towards Mr. Baldwin, which is as heartily reciprocated, the antagonism dating from a time when Lord Rothermere offered the former Prime Minister his support on certain terms which were not acceptable.

Another peer whom Mr. Baldwin has no affection for is Lord Beaverbrook, who has a passion for political power. In the time of his bosom friend, the late Andrew Bonar Law, that power was actual. Lord Beaverbrook had a kind of friendship with Lloyd George, which did not last. Lord Oxford would have no intimacy with Lord Beaverbrook whatever.

It was through politics, however, that the Canadian business man made a really wonderful career in this country, after shaking the dust of Canada from his shoes as a minor millionaire, who had accumulated his monies by a series of mergers, each one more profitable to its promoters than the other.

He began in Calgary as an insurance can-

dian Minister, and was elected Unionist member for Ashton-under-Lyne. In 1911 he was knighted. During the Great War he succeeded Lord Carson as Minister in Charge of Propaganda, and took all possible power accruing from the job into his own hands. Before that he had gained distinction as



LORD BEAVERBROOK.

vasser. In Montreal he became interested in the promotion and amalgamation of companies, and made a terrific deal over cement. One of his great capabilities in finance is his immediate grasp of all aspects of a big question.

He entered political life in this country in 1900 as Max Aitken, son of a Scottish Cana-

"Eye Witness" with the Canadian troops at the front.

During the War years he acquired controlling shares in the *Daily Express* and helped to found *The Sunday Express*. Both papers lavished praise on the proprietor, and an amusing verse was written in this connection:—

When Beaverbrook addresses Max,
Deep speaks indeed to deep.
The words are soft—"Vobiscum pax"—
Let none disturb by shouts or thwacks
The pleasant peace we keep.
But if the twins—as brothers may—
Should give each other pain,
What ghastly cries might rend the air
Between the now dejected pair
From Leatherhead to Stornoway,
From Fulham to Shoe Lane.

His lordship has the keenest sense of fun. He did not mind the famous cartoonist of an evening paper in which he has considerable interest depicting him again and again as a malicious gnome, a kind of gutter-Puck. He is a farceur, fond of practical jokes and burlesque.

In politics he is as much Radical as Con-

servative. He is a man who must have a mania. Having willed his paper to his son, he is now all out for Free Trade within the Empire and High Protection against all other outside countries. At one time he thought of cornering all the cinemas in Great Britain, just in the same way that as a boy he speculated in the marbles of his play-fellows—but he did not get the cinemas.

He has been described by a distinguished literary admirer as "having as much brain

as anyone—but he is impish."

It may be that among these nine exponents of Big Business there is a nucleus of Mr. Wells's "creative far-seeing men," who are to organise for peace, progress and felicity in an Arcadian world. Possibly two out of the nine have possibilities as World-Savers.

BEAUTY.

A LL loveliness by law is woo'd To lovelier similitude.

The dauntless eagle's lofty swerve Must follow its ordained curve.

White swans on tidal water make
A moving melody awake

When their swart webs that slowly beat Become the tide's own counterfeit.

The moon-led waves upon the sea Prove an unfaltering fealty;

The moon itself, the stars, the sun In their assigned orbits run;

And all things take their shape and hue From the perfection they pursue,

Fair in themselves since they are bond To fairer beauty far beyond.

WILFRID THORLEY.

Strabburg

GAMBLER'S HOPE

By J. J. BELL 0

Author of "Wee Macgreegor," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF OTHER CHAPTERS.

ADY BALLANTYRE, an attractive young widow in financial difficulties through speculation, is hoping that her son, Steve, will become engaged to the wealthy Winifred Charters. But during a cruise in Scottish waters Steve has become attached to Allsa Maclean, and he is arranging another trip in the Miranda during the following August. Luis, a young Spaniard whom Lady Ballantyre had "mothered" in boyhood, agrees to join the cruise, partly as a distraction from remorse (he has unintentionally killed one of his countrymen during a brawl), partly because he is interested in a story of a Spanish dagger and a parchment possessed by Ailsa's father, Hector Maclean, concerning buried treasure to which his own father's papers had made reference.

Lady Ballantyre, secretly ashamed, gets Luis to sell pictures and heirlooms and place the money to her account. These proceedings arouse the suspicions of his rascally deaf and dumb Spanish secretary, Gaspar Muñez, especially when Gaspar finds that Luis has discovered the fragment of bloodstained parch-

ment relating to the treasure buried at Tobermory.

Hector Maclean and Ailsa entertain the *Miranda* party on their arrival and introduce Hector's young partner, Ronald, who has long been in love with Ailsa. After a dinner-party, Hector dramatically produces an old Spanish dagger and a scrap of parchment. Luis brings out a photograph of part of a document the ragged edges of which exactly fit Maclean's fragment. It is evident that between them they hold the clue to the buried casket, especially when Luis deciphers a reference to a well. But the well, it appears, has been filled in long since, and Hector's house stands over it.

Luis discovers beyond doubt that his secretary in Spain has been tampering with Lady Ballantyre's letters and suspects that Muñez has informed the Church authorities of the impending treasure-hunt.

Maclean eventually agrees to uncover the well. If the jewels are found he will claim fifty per cent of

the proceeds on Ailsa's behalf, Luis and Lady Ballantyre can keep the remainder.

Father Macdonald, an old friend of Maclean's, is much puzzled by the presence at Tobermory of a mysterious foreigner with a fast motor launch, especially when he discovers that M. Dracquier is sending telegrams to Spain and hanging about in Hector's garden at dusk.

The well having been cleared by workmen, Ronald at night goes down under the water and after much probing brings up the jewel casket. But, unknown to the searchers, M. Dracquier, through a slit in the boarded window, has seen all. Ronald prepares to put off to the *Miranda* with news of his success. "Piff," says Hector, "that Miss Charters with her fine long legs and her eighty thousand pounds!

Ailsa will be getting a million pounds or so. It is going to be a great night for everybody.'

It is indeed. On the Miranda's return, at two o'clock in the morning, Maclean, with his usual strong sense of the dramatic, assembles the party in his dining-room and opens the leaden casket. Many rubies, sapphires and other stones are disclosed, cleansed, and passed round, when suddenly a tall man in black steps into the room. It is M. Dracquier. "In the name of His Holiness," he says, and takes the casket from Maclean's unresisting hands.

He darts from the room, pursued by Luis, who is on the point of stabbing him with the famous Spanish dagger when the fugitive whispers "Murderer!" Luis drops the dagger, and the same instant a fine

spray strikes him on the cheeks and in the eyes.

Dracquier gets away in his swift motor launch, hotly pursued by Ronald. In the black hour before the dawn there is fog out on the still waters. A horn sounds hoarsely and a big shape looms out of the mist, catching the Spaniard's frail craft amidships. "M. Dracquier, his helper, and the jewels of Santa Barbara went down in fifty fathoms.'

And Sir James Yates, the eminent eye surgeon, hastily summoned to examine Luis, can only answer Lady Ballantyre's agonized "He will see again—will he not?" by a blunt and uncompromising "No."

XXII.

HEN the grip of the pain is loosened and the fog of the drugs has drifted away, however weary the body, the mind grows busy again with thankful and hopeful thoughts, or with thoughts that are but another sort of torment.

"I am like the ghost of a man who has suddenly died, leaving all his affairs in confusion," brooded Luis in his helplessness. "I cannot reach out to put a single one of them right."

As soon as the doctor would allow it, Luis sent for Hector Maclean. It need not be supposed that Maclean was resigned to the loss of the jewels, or would ever be resigned; the thought of what might have been for Ailsa would be recurrent till thinking ceased; but the Highland heart can be generous.

"My dear Mr. Señor," he said tenderly, yet shrinking at the sight of the white-masked face, "this is a devil of a grief to us all. To think that it was happening in our house! Ailsa and I will never get over it."

"It is I who brought all the trouble, and all the blame is mine," Luis replied. "But now, since the doctor gives us only a few minutes, we must talk of the thing that is urgent. Lady Ballantyre must not be brought into the sensation, or scandal, or whatever the newspapers and police may make of it. I——"

Maclean patted the hand on the coverlet. "Keep your mind very easy, Mr. Señor. The reporters have been to the house, and they have gone away with a wild goose after them. With grateful thanks to the Almighty, I tell you I can be as fly as any man alive. Why should I bring in my cousin Flora and your good self? just told the reporters a very fine story about a sodda-water proposition, and a casket found in the old well, and a strange thief that came when I was showing the casket to my friends, and how he cowardly attacked one of my friends who tried to save the treasure, and how he got his reward in the Sound of Mull; and I advised them to seek for the body, and then they would, maybe, get some information in its pockets, which I would be very glad, indeed, to hear—only it is not so easy to find bodies in the Sound, with the strong tides, and so forth. And I listened to their questions till they had no more to ask, and then I showed them the well and gave them a wee dram, and Ailsa gave them tea, and they went away back to the mainland to report their reports; and there is one in the Glasgow paper of yesterday morning, called "A Mull Mystery," and you never in all your days read such a devil of a nonsense! No, no, Mr. Señor; do not be worrying about the newspapers. They will get money from me before they get truth—and that will not be this year, anyway."

"Thank you," said Luis. "I suppose

you have had the police, too?"

"Oh, yes, I have had the chief constable of this place, a very nice man, and an inspector from Oban, another very nice man, and they got all that I was pleased to tell them. And I told the chief constable that it was a fine-like thing for a man in his position to be letting a foreign thief go about Tobermory, and stop in the

Mishnish Hotel, and rob an honest man like myself. Oh, he did not like it at all, at all! And I told the inspector that it was his duty to find the body, and the casket too, if possible, and in future to keep a brighter look-out for suspicious characters coming off the trains at Oban—and he was not highly delighted, either! But, of course, there was a wee dram, and we parted good friends. So you see, Mr. Señor, you and Flora have nothing whatever to do with it in the public eyes. And I hope you will get on quickly now, and then you will come to stay at the house with us till you are quite strong again. We are very dull up there without you. Charters has gone to her friends in Rossshire, and Stephen is quite loose-ended. Father Macdonald was vexed to be leaving you, but he just had to go back to his own place. Alisa is sending him a wire about you every day-"

The nurse came in. "Sorry, Mr. Maclean,

ut----''

"Yes, yes, I am going," he said, rising. Then he bent over the bed, saying softly, "Would you like to see—God forgive me!—would you like Flora to come?"

There was a pause till Luis replied: "Thank you, but not yet. Give her my

love. Good-bye."

Maclean had eased his anxiety, but only for the immediate future. Trouble from Tobermory, or the mainland, did not seem likely, but what of Spain? Suppose that the body of the thief were found and a connection discovered between the dead man and Gaspar Muñez, in Toledo, a connection of which Luis had now not the slightest doubt? Then there could be no protection for Lady Ballantyre. Muñez, cornered, would surely do his spiteful worst, the whole truth would come out, and her name, along with his own, would blaze in print. A rare story for the papers, no doubt! Oh, if he could only rise up and go to Spain and confound, or, if need be (forgetting his blindness), slay the betrayer! . . . And then there was the gnawing dread of the effects of the mountain girl's confession. The Spanish policia might not have the energy of the British police, but, sooner or later, they would be bound to take action. It was not that Luis feared for his life, or even for his liberty; and, for all his native pride, public opinion in Spain mattered little to him. The prospect of a Spanish trial and a punishment, probably of modified severity, did not trouble him; but the prospect of arrest in Tobermory, in the presence of his friends, perhaps of his Lady, was a sickness at his heart, for he saw in it an offence, an insult to those for whom he cared, and who had given him their hands and hospitality.

ON the tenth day after the night of the disaster Sir James Yates came to see him, for the fourth time. When the examination was over, Luis remarked:

"You have not told me, and I have not

asked you. . . . We both know."

"I'm sorry," said the surgeon. "You have been brave."

Luis' lips—the upper part of his face was covered—gave an odd little twitch. "I hope you, or someone else, may be able to say that a year—even a month—hence. It is the—the lost, helpless feeling—you understand? I suppose it will grow more

acute as time goes on?"

"Up to a point—yes. But, as time goes on, you will find yourself again. That, Mr. de Lara, is not idly said. It is said out of my own fairly large experience of people who have suffered the terrible affliction that is yours. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, but surely the most miraculous thing in our make-up is our adaptability. When you move on again, as you must and will, since life is a pilgrimage—and not always a weary one—things that once mattered much will matter less. and things that once mattered little will matter more. I am not talking of material compensations—all the insurance corporations in the world could not compensate you—but I tell you, because some of my patients have told me, that there are beautiful and comforting things even in the darkness. Your friends have given me a sort of picture of the awfully sudden blow. I do not know—I am not asking to know what was behind it all, but it may be that you paid a price then for something that will yet be precious to you. . . . Forgive the sermon, Mr. de Lara. I wish it were in my power to give you more than words."

"I thank you for them," said Luis, "and for all your goodness. The nurse has told me about you, and how you have broken

up your holiday on my account."

"I am ashamed to say that I am having a very good time on your account, Lady Ballantyre having put that splendid yacht at the disposal of myself and my friends. So you may expect me to turn up again very shortly." He was at the door when Luis recalled him.

"Sir James, how soon shall I be fit to travel?"

"Travel! How far?"

"To Spain."

"Spain! My dear fellow!"

"It is urgent—more than urgent."

"Nothing is urgent when it is impossible."

"I was to have left for Spain on the morning after the-trouble."

"Yes, but now you have got to get over the trouble."

"How long?"

"It is too soon even to mention travel. Remember, you have been knocked out. Put your question three months hence, and then I'll begin to think of one of my young professional friends to go with you."

"Three months?"

"Three months. Try not to worry. Worry is so useless," said Sir James, noting the tightening of the lips, the clenching of the hand on the sheet.

Presently, in the nurse's parlour, he found Lady Ballantyre, her question in her blue eyes. He was puzzled by this beautiful woman, with the strangely dull, pale gold hair, who ought to have broken down long ago.

"Much better," he told her. "But he wants to get up and go to Spain. He had planned the journey—but, perhaps, you knew that."

"Yes, I knew."

"Were you aware of any urgent reason for the journey?" Sir James threw up his hand. "I don't want you to answer anything, Lady Ballantyre, except 'yes' or 'no.'"

"No—though I felt that the reason must be a serious one. My son thinks it may have been connected with Señor de Lara's secretary, and I feel that he may be right. Indeed, I suspect that all this dreadful affair is somehow connected with——" She stopped short.

"Is there nothing you could say, or do, to ease the patient's mind on this score?"

"My son would go to Spain on an hour's notice. So—so would I, Sir James. We would do anything for Señor de Lara."

"Then why not have a chat-not too

long a one-with him now?"

"He has never asked to see "—the word seemed to catch her breath—" any of us, except my cousin."

"Until to-day he has not been free from pain; he has not been his own man. I

will tell him you are here—if you are sure that you are equal to it."

"Oh, I am quite equal to it." She smiled wanly. "And I shall be careful not to tire him. By the way, there are several letters for him—"

"Don't mention letters, unless he asks for them. Now I will-"

than he is, and I'm glad of this opportunity to tell you so. You could not, unhappily, save the eyes, but you, undoubtedly, saved the face from permanent disfigurement."

The priest bowed his head. "I give thanks for that," he murmured. "And is it possible that I might see him—now?"



A tap on the door—Father Macdonald came in.

Lady Ballantyre's surprise may have covered her displeasure. "Why, I thought you were on your lonely island," she said, shaking hands.

"So I was, but I am in Tobermory again, as you see. I came on a trawler this time." The priest greeted the surgeon, whom he had met on the great man's first visit to Luis. "Have you good news for me, Sir James?"

"Yes. Your patient progresses, Father."

"My patient!"

"But for you he would be much worse

Sir James looked from one to the other. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I was about to admit Lady Ballantyre. I'm afraid I cannot allow two visitors this afternooon."

The priest made the inclination of one who resigns.

Lady Ballantyre hesitated. Days and nights she had been longing to touch the hand of Luis; but now she asked herself whether her presence, or the priest's, would mean the greater help to him.

"No, Sir James," she said abruptly, "I can come to-morrow. Let Father Macdonald be his visitor to-day."

And by that act of self-denial she served Luis well.

"I have been praying that you might come back, Father," Luis was saying a minute later, "not so much as a priest, but as a friend."

"I am whatever you will take me for. What can I do for you?"

"Write a letter for me—in Spanish—to

affront of my arrest . . . I think that is all you need write, Father, and I thank you for coming to my help like this. Another time I will tell you what it all means, and beg your prayers and advice. . . . You will write it, will you not?"

"I will write it; but if you will let me, I can do something more. I can go to Spain for you. And I can go at once."



"Lady Ballantyre hesitated. Days and nights she had been longing to touch the hand of Luis; but now she asked herself whether her presence, or the priest's, would mean the greater help to him."

the chief of the police in Toledo. Tell him that Luis de Lara is here, blind and unable to move. Beg him, if he has already given instructions for my arrest, to recall them, and to accept a de Lara's word of honour that I shall deliver myself up, in Toledo, at the earliest moment possible. Assure him that I ask the favour only in order that my friends here should be spared the

A long silence till Luis put out his hand, gropingly, and said: "That is charity beyond all my knowledge. But you cannot know what I might ask you to do for me in Spain."

"Î am afraid," Father Macdonald said quietly, "I know a good deal. On the night you were stricken, while I sat with you here, in the desperation of your pain

you talked and talked—not a confession, my friend; only a broken story; but the pieces told me much. Since I went back to the island I have been thinking of you lying helpless, and wondering if I could not help; and when I heard from Miss Maclean that you were mending I decided to offer my service. I have made all necessary arrangements, and here I am, with my passport of last year, which is still good, and all I need for the journey. Say the word, and I will take the four o'clock steamer for Oban, be in London in the morning, Paris in the afternoon, Biarritz

"But that is a killing journey-"

"People who live as I do are not so easily killed! What do you say? There is not much time——"

"I cannot refuse, Father, but it is a debt

that can never be paid."

Half an hour later, Luis rang for the nurse, and asked her to give Father Macdonald the jacket he had been wearing on his arrival at the hospital. When she had gone he said:

"You will find a letter with a Spanish stamp—read it and take it with you—also money. Take plenty. Make the journey as easy as possible. I cannot thank you. I cannot think why you are doing this for me."

Father Macdonald gave a quiet laugh. "You know I am fond of Spain, and you have given me a good excuse for an extra trip. Let that suffice for a reason."

Ready to go, he said: "Tell Lady Ballantyre what you have told me about

the—mountains."

"Father! It would be a horrible shock

"Nothing to what she has endured. Let the telling be part of your penance, though in penance you have surely paid in full. Tell her, my friend, so that, if I have news, I may send it to her to give to you. . . . Be of good courage. . . ."

Finding he had the time to spare, he decided to make a hasty call on Maclean. Passing along the street, he noticed the looks askance. Tobermory was no very friendly place for a Catholic priest at any time, and now he felt that he was being regarded as a person of ill-omen. It might well be that his presence now was prejudicial to Maclean. If that were so, the trouble was easily cured.

Lady Ballantyre was in the garden, and she told him that her cousin had gone away on business for the afternoon. "Then will you kindly tell him," he said, "that I was just passing through on my way to—Oban? But I may tell you, Lady Ballantyre, that I am going to Spain."

"Spain! . . . For Luis—for the Señor?"

"Yes; and I am telling you, because, if I should have news for him, it is to you I would send it. Will you permit that?"

"Of course, Father Macdonald. Is there

nothing I can do?"

"You can go to see him. I think he has something to tell you." The priest looked at his watch. "And now I must hurry away. You need not be saying it to Mr. Maclean, but I shall not be returning to Tobermory."

"Not after Spain?"

"No. . . . One fine morning, or the other sort, before very long, I shall be passing by Tobermory on my way home, and I will wave a wish for the peace and happiness of you all."

Her hand to her bosom, Lady Ballantyre watched him go. She had been so afraid of his winning Luis away. Perhaps he had been afraid of her for a like reason.

ON the following morning she went to visit Luis. She met the doctor coming from the little hospital, wherein Luis was then the only patient.

"Mr. de Lara is taking an interest in things at last," he remarked. "I have just been reading him some Stock Exchange quotations."

The nurse also proffered a cheerful report. "He insisted on having the barber."

Lady Ballantyre entered, her heart almost failing at the sight of the white mask. The nurse made Luis comfortable in a sitting posture, placed a chair at the bedside, and retired.

There was silence till he said: "Where is your hand, Lady?"

She laid it in his fingers and slipped down on her knees. "Oh, Luis, Luis," she whispered, "to think that I should have brought this upon you!"

He spoke rather abruptly, struggling against a temptation to shirk the ugly confession. "Please put away all thoughts of that sort," he said. "I brought it upon myself—that is certain. I am going to tell you the truth. That night I had the scoundrel at my mercy, but because of something—a crime—I did two years ago, I was impelled to give him the advantage. I am going to tell you about that crime. The memory of it has come between your

blue eyes and mine times without number."

He told his tale briefly, baldly, as we know it.

"And is that all?" she said, when he had ended. "Why, Luis, you killed the man simply because he was a beast, and because the knife happened to be there. Oh, it's all very well to talk of our law and order, but how many beastly people would die in London every day if we all carried handy knives?"

"It was a murder."

She took his hand and laid it to her cheek. "That for the murder! Oh, why didn't you tell me long ago? I am not the fine, delicate creature you seem to think I am. I'm not horrified. I'm sorry only for you. And so it was the sudden memory of it that made you spare that unspeakable brute——"

"And lost you your jewels, Lady. I have a costly conscience, have I not?"

"Don't speak like that, Luis! It was I, not you, who made the jewels accursed. But for me they would have been blessed!" She drew a long breath. "Now, I'm going to tell you about my crime—a crime that put nothing vile out of the world, and brought awful trouble into it. I mean my later speculations. . . . Luis, how did you find me out?"

"The mate handed me the wrong telegram. I opened it before I knew. Lady," he said kindly, "you must be doing pretty well out of 'Flossies.' Before you came, I got the doctor to tell me the prices. Will you believe me when I say I am glad?"

"I can believe anything you say—you have always been truthful to me," she replied; "but I wonder if you can possibly believe that I am glad because I closed my accounts—"

"When?"

"I wrote the wire the night you were—hurt."

"But why?"

"I don't know, exactly." He would have loved her colour then. "I thought it might—somehow—please God, and make it better for you."

"My dear!"

"And, at the same time, I wrote a letter to Steve, telling him—everything. . . . Don't be angry, Luis."

"Angry—when I can guess what the doing of those things must have cost you? Oh, Lady, Lady!"

"It did good in one way," she said.

"Steve and I are better friends than ever we have been. He didn't seem to despise me, after all. And the first thing he is going to do, when we go back to London, is to return to you your money."

"That," said Luis stiffly, "is out of the question. Does Steve want to put me in the dust? Tell him he must never think of it again. The money came to him from you, not me.... Forgive my being sharp, but you did hurt me then.... Tell me about yourself. Surely you got something out of the 'Flossies'?"

She shook her head—then realised that the gesture was nothing to him. "I can't deceive you any more," she said. "I have just enough to pay my debts."

In his helplessness he sighed.

"Luis," she suddenly asked, "did you think me a very extravagant woman in the old days?"

"I did not—and I remember how you used to lecture me for being an extravagant

young ass."

"Well, I'm not an extravagant woman now. It was the speculation that made me want a great deal of money. You see, I had to be always doing things. I wasn't myself. I haven't been myself for nearly five years—till now. Can you believe that?" The blue eyes were very anxious.

"Quite easily. But, Lady, what are you going to do about it? Steve, of course——"

"I refuse to take a penny from Steve!"
"You refuse? Then——?" He halted, at a loss.

After a while she said: "Luis, you told me that, last night on the yacht—in my office, you remember?—that you had lots of money. I wondered how it could be so, after all you had given me."

For the first time his lips smiled. "Perhaps I boasted," he said. "But, as far as I can see, there will be a small income, which, of course, is yours." There was always the monastery.

"Half of it will do, Luis," she said

bravely.

The smile had passed. "I wonder what you mean by that," he said slowly.

"I mean that—that I will be—a very careful—wife—to you, Luis." She covered her face, forgetting that it was already hidden from him.

A long minute passed before he spoke. "Dear, that was beautiful of you. But though I have loved you all my life, you are not going to marry a blind man."

"Don't say it!" The tears had come

at last, and for a while were uncontrollable. "It's no use your trying-in your gentleness-to explain it away," she sobbed. "It is I, only I, who have brought it upon you —and I can't bear it. Luis, I can't bear it—alone. If only for pity's sake, take me and my poor blue eyes to serve and guide you. That night, before we went into Hector's garden, when you put your arms round me, I thought that happiness and peace, in spite of all I had done to make them impossible, were coming to me at last. I must have been loving you for a long time, Luis, though I didn't give in to it till we were on the Miranda. And now——"

"Lady, your words have made up for many sad and lonely days and nightsbut you may not do this thing. Blind, with very little money, I'd be merely a burden; but with disgrace as well——"

"Disgrace?"

"I have told you. I don't know how they may deal with me, but-"

"My dear, they would never touch you

now!" She dried her tears.

"I wonder! I'm afraid they will have to do something. They cannot wink at a murder. And, after being in prison, I could never-never-"

"Oh, yes, you could! Why, I'd do something or other and get sent to prison too! Ah, Luis,"—taking his hand—"you

cannot escape me now!

His smile came again, but it was sad. "I think I should like a cigarette," he remarked. "There are some somewhere in the room. They say that blind peoplewhy wince? One has got to get used to the word—do not enjoy smoking, because they cannot see the smoke; but I always had a fairly strong imagination."

She dried her eyes, got him a cigarette and a light, and sat by the bedside, holding

the ash-tray.

"I am worried," he said, "about that man Muñez, my secretary. He has been the promoter of all the trouble-no one else could have known enough to start it —and I cannot be sure that he is at the end of his mischief. Possibly he is still in ignorance of what has happened, though by now he must be wondering."

"What do you fear most from the man,

Luis?"

"That he makes a scandal. What would you think of me if your name appeared in the Sunday papers, under headings such as 'The Tobermory Adventurers,' or --- ?"

"Luis, I wish you would not worry about

trifles," she said firmly. "I never did care much what the crowd thought of me, and I'll care far less now. And if you fancy that any bogey, such as scandal, would keep me away from you now-well, your imagination is too strong!"

She put forward the tray to catch the ash, and he let fall the cigarette in it, saying:

"I don't think I want to smoke any

more just now."

"Are you tired?"

"No. . . . It's a sort of-far-off feeling that gets me sometimes. Are you quite

near, Lady?"

"I could be a little nearer." She set the tray on the table and seated herself on the edge of the bed. "Shall I put my arm round you?" she asked very tenderly.

His mouth twitched; he gave a slight

"All round, Luis?"

He seemed to look up. "When did I hear that before?"

"Long, long ago. You said it yourself. Our first meeting, you remember?"

"Ah, yes. When I fell in love with you, Lady." The smile was a failure.

He was drooping against her breast; her cheek was touching his dark hair.

His hand crept up; timidly his fingers

felt the contour of her face.

"Oh, Maria Sanctissima," he said in a breaking whisper, "for one glimpse of her blue eyes!... Lady, help me—help me

Her other arm went to his aid. "Luis, I think if you really knew how much I cared, you would forget your pride and take me now. Do you know, my hair has lost all its sheen. As Hector put it, all the gold has gone away."

"The gold—gone away?"

"It happened in that awful night." "Not grey-not-white, Lady!"

"No; just dull. Not altogether unbecoming. But, you see, it was because I—loved you so. . . . Luis, don't break my heart."

N Sir James's next visit, Luis put the question:

"Honestly, will my eyes be hideous?"
"Oh, no. You have, perhaps, seen a case of cataract?"

"Yes. . . . Like that?" Luis clenched his hands.

"Something like that. Men have had worse than cataract to show to those who

loved them. Your friends have told me that you came through the War." The surgeon paused.

"Yes. . . . I think I see what you mean—and I will try to remember."

N the fourth morning after his departure from Tobermory, Father Macdonald stood within the gates of the de Lara mansion, in Toledo. He had given the aged servant a card on which he had written

re M. François Dracquier

and his own name.

In the library Gaspar Muñez, whose impatience had of late given place to nervous anxiety, pondered awhile, and then signed to the servant to admit the visitor. On the card he pencilled an alteration, so that it read:

Who is M. François Dracquier?

And, on the priest's entrance, he bowed and returned the card. He then pointed to his mouth and ears.

With an inclination the priest acknowledged the information and glanced at the

"This M. Dracquier," he said, "was a person who, while on a visit to Scotland, obtained a certain casket of jewels, but, shortly afterwards, was drowned, with his companion, in the Sound of Mull. casket went down with him. Somehow, I thought you might have known thegentleman."

Muñez' look of mystification was really well done, though wasted on Father Macdonald, who was already bringing out a

"I am aware that you are an English scholar and an adept at lip-reading. wrote this, did you not, Señor Muñez?" he said pleasantly, and Señor Muñez did not deem it expedient to deny his own writing.

"It is fact, this that you have written here, Señor Muñez?"

A grave bow from the Spaniard.

"You are perfectly satisfied that it is the truth?"

Another grave bow.

The priest also appeared satisfied. thank you," he said courteously. "And now it is my melancholy duty to inform you that your employer, Don Luis de Lara, was made blind for life by this M. Dracquier." He gave some details of the outrage.

Señor Muñez' horror was also really well done, but its sincerity became less apparent when the priest added:

"It is known that this M. Dracquier was a Spaniard, and, no doubt, before long the police will discover his-h'm-patron."

Here Señor Muñez began to write on his tablets, but the priest interrupted him.

"Yesterday, Señor Muñez, I visited a certain village in the mountains. I spent an interesting hour with the padre, who, in the course of our talk, informed me that Serafina Gomez died, not the other day, as your letter suggests, but seven months ago, and that she made no confession of perjury whatsoever."

The tablets slipped from the secretary's

Father Macdonald's stature seemed to increase; his pointing finger was accusation made manifest. "To God, who has afflicted you, we leave your punishment. In the name of Don Luis de Lara, and on his behalf, I give you one hour in which to depart from this house." Having thus spoken, he turned and made his way out.

An hour amply sufficed for Muñez to collect and pack his best belongings, including an old revolver. Another hour, and he would have collected his monies from the bank, and from his gaming-house and money-lending bureau. He was now not so badly off. Enough to give him, in some quiet corner of Spain, easy existence for the remainder of his days. And, at all events, he was well revenged on Luis de Lara.

He crossed the patio, bag in hand, murmuring a curse on the house and all that it represented. The servant opened the gate for him, and he stepped out into the dust and sunshine. He glanced down the street, seeking a cab, then up—and suddenly wilted. A Capitan and private of the Policía were approaching at a pace betokening duty. Muñez turned back.

The servant, still at the gate, readmitted him, and cried out at the sight of his face. What the servant saw was Panic.

Muñez reached the house and staggered along the passage into the room of the green bulb, now dustier than ever, on the desk. In a crazy instant he smashed it with his fist. He was trembling so violently that he could scarcely stand, and his fingers fumbled the key against the lock of his bag. But the police should never take him-

The Capitan and private stepped smartly

past the gates, but, a dozen yards beyond them a sudden sound brought them to a halt.

"A shot!" remarked the Capitan—and

they went back. . . .

At the end of the hour, Father Macdonald, determined to "mak' siccar," returned. He found a small chattering crowd lingering about the gates.

ATE in the afternoon, Lady Ballantyre read the priest's telegram to the invalid:

"Serafina died February making no confession. Muñez lied. Be happy."

A little later came a second message—

"Muñez died at noon."

"Luis," said Lady Ballantyre, in the evening, "do you wish me to seek admission to your Church?"

He took her hand to his lips.

"Lady, shall we be less faithful to each other because we are faithful to our faiths?"

Wiseacres will wag their heads. Different faiths; disparity of ages; a slayer and a gambler!—how shall these two find happiness together? How, indeed, when so many couples of one faith, of the most approved ages, possessed of all the leading virtues, fail to find it? Yet there is hope, since, life being what it is, most of our happiness is the result of making the best—the very best—of a bad job.

THE EPILOGUE.

POR a few hours, on the last day of October, warm summer had come back to Tobermory, and the trees about Maclean's house had been bright with gold and bronze and the colours of wine. But now the sun was sinking and the trees turning sad and sober, while a light chill breeze moved down from the mountains to the grey Sound.

"Let us go in, Luis. You are looking ever so much the better of to-day."

She took his arm, and they went slowly across the lawn. Far more pathetic than the tinted glasses hiding his eyes was the diffidence in his step.

Carefully she guided him through the porch and across the hall to an easy chair beside the wood fire. It was growing dusky in the hall; and, though one seems to be

remembering all the time, how easily one forgets! Almost she had asked him if he wanted the lights! Her eyes filled. This was the sort of thing that happened to Flora Ballantyre every hour of the day. She was surely become the tenderest-hearted woman in the world.

She leaned against the piano, looking down at the man who was soon to be her husband. It was their last evening in Tobermory. On the morrow they would sail away, on the mail-boat, like ordinary people. The *Miranda* had long since steamed south. Steve had gone back to Oxford. Winifred was in London. Another year, and they would marry.

Luis took out a cigarette and a box of matches. He opened the box—upside down—and the contents were scattered.

"Never mind, dear," she said quickly.

"Wait; I'll give you a light."

He let fall the cigarette. "Where are you, Lady?"

She knew the note in his voice, went down on her knees, and put her arms round him.

"Shall I never be able to do anything for myself?" he said.

"Dear, give yourself a little time."

"If only I could find something I could do."

"It will come."

"I cannot go on like this, depending on you for every movement of the day."

"I'm here for that, but I know I shan't be needed always." She seemed to be making up her mind. At last—"Luis, won't you try your music again?"

He shook his head. "Why not, dear?"

"I am afraid of breaking down."

"You won't do that! Why, I have just been remembering how, long ago, when you came home on leave, you used to play for hours in the darkness—perfectly."

He laughed shortly. "I did not mean that sort of breaking-down. . . . You darling, you darling, you are thinking all the time of ways to help me. . . . Yes, I will try, if you will get me to the piano."

HECTOR MACLEAN, balancing his cash-book in the office and mourning recent abnormal expenditure, sat up with a start.

Luis had begun to play, very slowly and softly, as it should be played, "Les Millions d'Arlequin" Serenade—the tune that, oddly

enough, had appealed to his rugged host

on a previous occasion.

"Now is that not just splendid!" Maclean muttered, rubbing his hands; but for some reason, which is obscure, the tears ran out of his eyes and down into his beard.

In the garden Ailsa, standing beside

for himself!" said Ronald on a note of apprehension.

Yes, I am, and always will be—but not

with the same sort of loving as——"

"As what, Ailsa?"

"Never mind! Pay attention to the music."



"Father Macdonald's pointing finger was accusation made manifest. 'To God, who has afflicted you, we leave your punishment. . . . I give you one hour in which to depart from this house.'"

Ronald, with whom she had been sailing all the afternoon in the white motor-boat, wept a little also.

"It is the best thing that could have happened," she faltered. "Do you know, Ronald, I was once very near to loving him for his music."

"And maybe you are loving him now

Luis paused, then broke into a Spanish dance.

Whereupon Maclean in his office sprang up, clapped his hands and, addressing space, cried:

"Hah, the agility! That is a devil of a good thing! He will be happy now. . . . I wonder if he would be caring for a wee dram when that job is finished."

Five minutes later, the "job" having come to its end, he stole to the diningroom door and peeped into the darkish hall.

"My! they are getting rather fond of

each other," he murmured.

It certainly looked like it. Flora was sitting beside Luis, her arm about him, her cheek on his shoulder.

Just as Maclean was about to speak, Luis

began to play again—quietly.

Piff!" said the old man, who could have done with a wee one himself, and went back to his cash-book.

"Luis," said Flora, when, at the end of an hour, he paused, "what were those things you played just now?"

"I do not know—a number of nothings."

"You mean-you-they just came, and you played them ?"

"I suppose so."

"Then you can make-you could compose music!"

"Do you think I could ?"

"Yes, I do. You know, you have music in your very blood. It would be the most natural thing in the world. You will try-Luis, won't you?"

"I wonder." His hands went back to the keys, but he did not start to play just then. At first his attitude was that of a man who listens. Then his comrade became aware that he was sitting erect, his head held high, as in former days.

IN the hall it was very still.

Maclean came again to the diningroom door. But he hesitated to announce himself. "Maybe they are preferring to be lonely alone," he said to himself. He liked the phrase, and repeated it-"Lonely alone!"

Yet it was not strictly true of Luis and

A spirit had come to them, there in the silence and darkness, a spirit finer and stronger and braver than Hope. . . . Courage!

THE END.

The many readers who have followed with unflagging interest the successive instalments of "Gambler's Hope" will be interested to know that this masterly story will shortly be published in volume form.

YOUNG CITY CLERK

IN a great tome he marries "sell" and "buy," Meek squire of carpet knight he never sees. On his high stool he will grow grey and die Some day when Spring, perchance, is in the trees. But till that time he travels with the pen League after league along the narrow line, Snatching a rare enfranchise now and then In golden fields comraded, fitly-fine.

The "faites devoir!" is clarion. Now he rides A neighing stallion, thrones his queen of grace, And spills in tournament the heart's red tides For sake of a transfigured typist's face. Oh! Arthur asleep in Lyonnesse does not know How London ogres clamp the dreaming lad, Who should be questing with his shield of snow . . . This young born-out-of-season Galahad!

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.

HOW TO KEEP FIT

* A Series of Simple Exercises *

By Elisabeth Partington.m.p.c. London

Photographs by G. Hana.

2ND SET: EXERCISES TO AID DIGESTION.

THE exercises this month are a little more strenuous than those given in the last issue, but start the day with them and find how they will stimulate the appetite.

When one considers that the solid part of the body consists of about 45 per cent. muscle, and that in order to be healthy this muscle requires work, it is evident that no one can keep in condition unless he practises physical exercises or indulges in daily activity.

Exercise rightly regulated causes a rapid and healthy exchange of tissue. An active muscle is always more richly supplied with blood than a lazy one. Therefore one of the best ways to refresh the body is by exercise.





Ex. 1.—Stand with heels together and arms raised as in first illustration; then bring arms downward and knee upward as in second illustration. Do not bend the body as the knee is lifted. The body must be kept quite straight.

This is really a balance movement, which makes for a good carriage and also helps one to cultivate concentration and calmness.





Ex. 2.-Stand in position, arms down by the sides.

Raise arms to shoulder line; at the same time raise each leg alternately sideways as illustrated.

For reducing the hips strengthening and shaping the ankles and legs.

Ex. 3.-Stand with one foot forward and arms raised upward.

Bend as far forward as possible beyond the foot, as illustrated below.

Raise to position, bringing the foot back; change to other foot and

For development of the lower part of the chest. The abdomen becomes flattened by the extension of the abdominal muscles.



Ex. 4.—Stand with arms stretched upward as in first position. Bring arms down to a bent position; at the same time lower the body, as shown, to a fully bent position. Raise body and stretch arms upward.

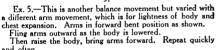
This exercise is for balance, combining an arm movement for cultivation of the general equilibrium; it also flattens out the shoulder blades.

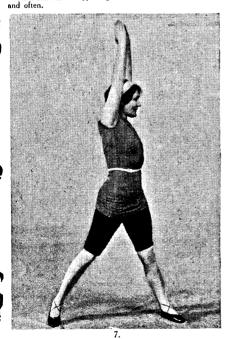
Start 25 times on first occasion and increase to 100.











Ex. 7.—This is a jumping exercise for developing spring in the body and control.

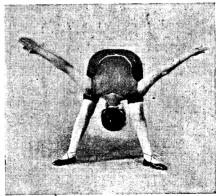
Stand with feet together and hands down, jump with feet apart, at the same time bend arms upward, fingers touching elbows. Then push arms upward and twist body at the waist-line to one side as far as possible, as in illustration; turn to the front again bringing arms to bent position.

Conclude exercise by a jump with feet together and arms down.

down. Repeat opposite side.

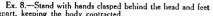






Ex. 6.—Stand with feet apart, arms stretched outward level with the shoulders. Bend forward and backward as far as possible, as illustrated. This is an excellent exercise for the upper part of the spine, as every joint is affected, and when these are in good condition they in turn affect the nerves to a great degree. Also this is a wonderful "slimming" exercise.





Ex. 8.—Stand with hands clasped behind the head and feet epart, keeping the body contracted.

Then stretch arms outward beyond each toe as far as possible. Then raise the body with arms in neck rest position again, keeping the elbows well back.

This is a strenuous exercise if done properly, and is good for making the lower part of the spine supple.



Ex. 9.—Stand with heels together and hands down. Swing both arms to the side as illustrated, then swing them forward and upward, keeping them quite straight. Then swing to the opposite side, then forward and upward, bringing both arms

downward to straight position.

This exercise is for developing and strengthening the arms and shoulders.



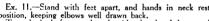


Ex. 10.—From a standing position, arms down and feet together, raise the arms forward and one foot forward, as shown in first i lustration. Then, while keeping the feet in same position, twist body to the left, flinging arms outward as in second position. Fling arms forward and turn body forward to first picture, then arms and feet together as started.

Repeat with opposite side.

This exercise stimulates the liver by compressing and releasing it, and is also for reducing the waistline and thighs.





Ex. 11.—Stand with feet apart, and hands in neck rest position, keeping elbows well drawn back.
Turn the body far round to the side, then bend downward as illustrated, taking care to keep elbows in drawn back position.
Raise the body and turn to opposite side; repeat, then upwards and turn to the front, with arms down.
This exercise is for the upper part of the muscular system.



Ex. 12.—Stand with hands clasped behind head (neck rest position) and feet astride, keeping the body contracted and upright; then bend body forward and stretch the arms as far as possible outward beyond each foot, keeping both knees straight; then raise the body and arms to neck rest position and repeat opposite side.

This is a strenuous exercise if executed rightly. It makes the lower part of the spine supple.

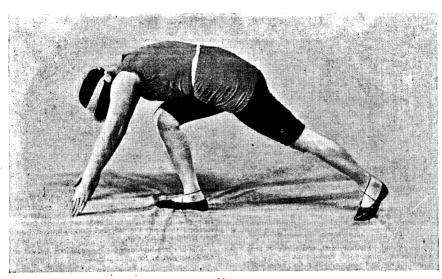


13.

Ex. 13.—Stand with feet apart.
Swing arms outward and upward as shown.
Then swing arms outward and downward, keeping palms outward, making a complete circle with the arms in the upward and downward movements.
All rigidity vanishes with this exercise.
Start with 20 movements, increasing up to 100



13a.



14.

Ex. 14.—Lunge forward with alternate leg and arms in upward position. Bend forward, touching the ground, as illustrated.

Still in lunge position, raise arms and go back to upright position; then body upward, arms down and feet together. This exercise is for chose especially who have not known perfect fitness and wish to build up their constitutions.





15a.

Ex. 15.—With arms bent forward, shoulder level over the chest, lunge sideways as far as you can, at the same time flinging arms outward as illustrated.

Bend forward touching the ground, as in second picture, keeping arms and body contracted. Raise arm and body back to first illustration, then upward to starting position.

In this exercise the ribs are spread apart, increasing chest capacity. It is also good for promoting strength and agility.



"Irene gathered up her bag and gloves and strode off."

SILK STOCKINGS

By JOAN STUART DUCKETT

ILLUSTRATED BY D. L. MAYS

In the right-hand corner of the top drawer lay a pair of pink silk stockings. They were without darn or blemish, the crown of Irone's wardrobe and her dearest treasure. They were not allowed to mix with the common "half-silk" and "cotton-tops" in the lower drawer, but slept secluded with their toes tucked into each other's mouths—like aristocrats. They had cost—maybe a guinea: and they were worth—your first party-frock, Little Girl, your first walkingstick, Little Boy.

Irene wore them on Special Occasions. The mere donning of them proclaimed festival: was, perhaps, the sweetest moment of the festival. When Irene's mother saw them in conjunction with patent-leather, she asked: "What time is John calling for you, dear?" When she saw them in conjunction with silver brocade, she sighed and lent Irene her latchkey.

On a certain spring morning Irene and her John and her pink silk stockings went for a picnic. Pink silk is not, perhaps, the wearbest suited to picnics; but when one is nineteen and in love with one's self for one's lover, suitability counts for very little.

Irene was a typist, John was a mechanic and spent most of his time crawling about the intestines of a car; they had both of them worked willing overtime for a week to earn this one day's holiday.

They spent thirty-five minutes in a lazy Southern express; crossed fields, climbed gates, and came, at noon, to the little wood that they called their own. They had discovered this wood the previous summer; they were quite sure that no one knew of it but themselves. It was Irene's idea of heaven: green and warm, and things to eat in a little basket.

The entry was perilous. There was no

gate: the wood was entirely surrounded by a steep ditch filled with brambles and rank grass, and harbouring-according to Irene—snakes and toads and other fearsome reptiles. Beyond this ditch rose a wooden fence, and beyond the fence the ground dropped dangerously—four feet or more.

John went first: he had a cool head. Then he stood on the other side of the fence and encouraged Irene. Irene jumped the ditch and mounted the fence like a ladder; she sat upon the top rail and swung her feet over and gave her two hands to John. was a fearful jump. . . . "Come on," said John encouragingly.

"I've got you."

"It's very steep . . ." said Irene.

She jumped; a nail caught one of the precious stockings: there was a sound of tearing silk and a heart-broken wail.

"Oh, John! My stocking! . . . Why

weren't you careful?"

"It doesn't matter," said the tactful John. "There's no one here to see you."

Irene had been contorting herself for a better view of the tragedy. She straightened up and stared at him wonderingly.

"They were SILK!" said she in a tone that one generally reserves for the deaf.

John reasoned with her:

"It was your own fault, you know: you took off badly. When you vault, you should put your hand so . . . and swing. . See ? "

"Old Clever!" said Irene viciously. She sat down disconsolately upon the grass and lapped together the torn edges She had no needle: the tear would ladder . . . in all directions. . . . Like a road map. . . . She could have

Too late, John suffered remorse. He squatted down beside her and patted her knee.

"Poor little girl! . . . And the pretty

stockings! I'm so sorry."

Now had he said this five minutes earlier, Irene would have forgiven him and wept within his arms, and all would have been well: as it was . . .

"It's n-nothing," said Irene coldly.

wasn't your fault."

The day was spoilt.

In the south-west corner of the wood was a little clearing dedicated to picnics and presided over by two giant trees. The names of these trees were-according to Irene-Mr. Lyons and Mr. ABC, and you ate your lunch at their feet and neatly tucked away the papers between their toes. Mr. Lyons had a tall and squeaky treble and Mr. ABC a rich and breathless bass, and they were—according to Irene—much given to mutual abuse.

But to-day there was no abuse. .

"Shall we sit here?" inquired Irene

politely.

"It looks all right," said John. He was trying to make it appear: (a) that there was nothing wrong, (b) that there never had been anything to be wrong, and (c) that he

had not seen this place before.

He spread his raincoat and they sat, John with his back to Mr. Lyons and Irene with her back to Mr. ABC. Irene unpacked the sandwiches. She arranged them upon a white napkin and offered them to John. He had been tearing at the lush-stemmed bluebells and his hands were stained with This did not seem to interfere with his sap. appetite.

Irene wrinkled her dainty nose. She took a handkerchief from her bag and wiped her

own fingers fastidiously.

"Silk ?" inquired John, with a provocative side-glance.

Up went Irene's eyebrows and down came the corners of her mouth.

"No," said Irene. "Nor likely to be."

She restored the handkerchief to her bag and took a mouthful of sandwich.

"Janie Wright's boy, when they got engaged, he told her he had ten pounds saved for her ring, but if she would like something pretty to wear—it didn't all have to go for the ring. It seemed to Janie wicked waste to spend ten pounds on diamonds when paste looks just as good, so she had a crêpe-de-chine dance-frock and a new hat and her ring as well. But she has to explain this to everyone, because the ring looks kind of cheap by itself and that makes people think not much of her man——— It's funny how some men seem to understand the way a girl feels."

"I thought you liked my ring," said John

Irene made swift reparation:

"I love it. You know I do. . . . is only turquoise."

"Heaven!" "Women cried John.

-!"

"They're pretty cheap," said complacently.

And John retorted, with the satisfaction that comes of telling the truth at great personal risk:

"You—are typical."

Irene gasped. She was truly amazed. She started to her feet, trembling with anger and surprise.

"Typical? Me . . .? I've stood your

" Well ?"

"I wonder that you ever asked me to marry you," said Irene, beginning to cry.



It doesn't matter,' said the tactful John. 'There's no one here to see you.'"

temper and your nasty sarcasm, but when it comes to insults-

"I called you a woman," said John.
"A typical woman."

"Oh," said the tactful John, "I don't care for clever women."

Irene checked herself half-way down a She gathered up her bag and gloves, and strode off, very straight, between the trees. And her back!... The wonder was that the unlucky man survived.

John bolted the remains of his sandwich and burried after her.

"But, Irene-"

There was no response.

"I didn't mean that you-"

Irene stopped and confronted him. She clenched her fists.

"I may be a fool, but I'm not such a fool as to go about telling other people what fools they are. It takes a man to do that: a great, stupid elephant of a man!... Oh! you study hard, and maybe you'll learn some day how to please a woman long enough to get her married to you. I'm going home!"

At the gate to the first field, Irene hesitated. There were cows in the field and they, perhaps, had something to do with

1t. . . .

After all . . . he hadn't meant to be cruel. He just didn't understand: it was her place to be kind and forbearing and to teach him. . . .

But if she went back now, he would think that she couldn't do without him. And men only valued a woman who didn't care. . . .

"I'll make it up with him," Irene decided, "but he must come to me first."

She set off valiantly across the field.

When she arrived at the station her train had just gone and she had half an hour to wait for the next. She spent the half-hour looking at time-tables and bitterly hating John. It was not until the train had pulled out of the station and he was irrevocably left behind, that she began to regret. . . .

The things she had said to him! He would never love her again! At the thought of their beautiful day all spoilt and wasted, hot tears burned Irene's lids.

The fat lady in the opposite seat was watching her with sympathetic interest. Irene became suddenly conscious of this. She began to wonder what the fat lady was thinking of her—to fit herself with a tragedy worthy of the fat lady's compassion:

She had lost her father?... Parted from her lover?... No: he was dead. They had quarrelled and he had died unbeknown to her, and she was on her way to plead with his dead lips for forgiveness...

Irene's heart swelled to breaking; her face took an expression of fixed and noble sorrow. She almost forgot what she had

been crying about.

The train steamed into the terminus; the fat lady transferred her interest to her own baggage; Irene went home. Her mother also had gone out for the day: she was alone. And there was no dinner.

All that day Irene waited for John to come back and be forgiven. As the hours passed her resentment grew, and so, strangely enough, did her pain. John was unworthy of her. And the unworthier he became, the more she wanted him.

At half-past eight the postman brought a narrow box addressed in John's handwriting.

Irene smiled.

The duffer! As though a present could heal fundamental differences. How little he understood her!

She undid the wrappings. Packed snugly within white tissue lay a pair of pink silk stockings.

THE LITTLE THINGS

It is not much to part and say Good-bye,
As hand is wrenched from hand, and heart from heart,
A swift sharp stab, an agonising cry
Lost in the soul's swift flame of ecstasy.

It is not hard to play the martyr's part
To stand upright, and proudly bear the pain,
The wound goes deep and straight into the heart
A moment's immortality to gain.

But ah! the dreams that lose themselves in tears As hours are merged in days—the days in years, The hopeless pain, when one is stripped of wings, Faced by the little things of life—the little things!

ELSIE PATERSON CRANMER.



NO NEED FOR ALARM.

Gerald (exhibiting spider dangling on thread of web, to his terrified mother): It's all right, mother, I won't let it off its lead!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE GAFFER ON ROMANCE.

By W. E. Richards.

"WIMMIN," quoth Gaffer Mangold, contemplating the pattern at the bottom of his quart mug, "allus hankers after what they can't get

"Romance. That's what they want. Thev ain't practical like their grandmothers. They didn't want second-hand Romance at ninepence a time (including tax), and they didn't get it neither. A magic lantern in the schoolroom oncet a year was all they got, and not a laugh in it 'cept when the slides was put in upside down or the vicar turned up the lights suddenlike. But there warn't no talk of surplus wimmin in them days, mister. They knew how to catch husbands without these silk stockings and lip-sticks. When they took a fancy to a young man, they didn't make Hollywood eyes at him. They asked him into the kitchen and set a good 'am tea in front of him. There's nowt softens the heart-strings like a good 'am

"Take my darters, now. Six of 'em and not a weddin' ring among 'em, and all because they're so set on Romance. They want the young men to say it with music, and there's ten likely lads in the parish as can do justice to a 'am tea to one as can do justice to 'The night shades are falling' in three flats.

"Can you hear that noise like a corn-crake, mister? That's Bert, the tailor's improver, singing 'Come into the garden, Maud,' though her proper name's Susan, or Sue for short, but a trifle like that don't stop a tenor when he's roused. There he goes, 'I am here at the gate alo-o-o-ne.' Allus at my gate he is. What's an improver at the tailoring got to be 'anging round my gate for? Why can't he press his suit on somebody else's gate?

"If they'd only get down to it, and get the young man indoors in front of a knife and fork tea, instead of keeping him out on the damp grass so that he'll be crippled with rheumatiz when he ought to be supporting his father-in-law, the banns would be up in no time. A young fellow who's worth his salt won't hang about the damp garden. He'd sooner treat her to six penn'orth at the Pictures.

"But that's nigh as bad. Pictures is all Romance. Nowt practical about 'em. I know. I took my missis oncet. Cost me a shilling, it did, and pisened my life for months. It unbalanced her, and if ever I meet Mr. Douglas Fairbanks I shall give him a bit of my mind. If Douglas likes to leap precipices and swim rivers, he's welcome to his hobbies. I'm a thinking man mysen, and a quiet game of dominoes

is more to my mind. It would be better for all parties concerned if Douglas kept his hobbies private. Do I ask the Gaumont Graphic to take a close up of me winning the Domino Handicap at the Blue Dragon? Then why does Douglas let every silly woman see how he makes love to Mary?

"You see, mister, it unsettled her. She wanted me to be like Douglas Fairbanks and leap precipices and swim torrents. But she ain't a bit of good in the Mary Pickford line herself, though I must say she's a rare

hand at a current dumpling.

"We next seed a film of a gent (William S. Hart or Harold Lloyd, I forget which), who climbed up a drainpipe on to a balcony to serenade his lady-love with a guitar. Then William or Harold (I forget which) lifted the lady like a sack of flour and shinned down the drainpipe to the nearest registry.

Very pretty it were, but not practical.
"'Why didn't you do that,' she whispered, 'when you wed me?'

"Well, why should I when her house had got a good staircase, and when her father and brothers was guarding me as if I was a prisoner and not a free-born Briton on his wedding Besides, I'd got my best suit on. Would William S. Hart or Harold Lloyd (I forget which) climb



FORETHOUGHT.

DONAL (after thoughtful silence): Do ye like wee boxes o' chocolates, Maggie?

MAGGIE: Aye, I do that, Donal!

DONAL: Weel, if ye gets ain' wi' a bit-piece o' red ribbon round it, ye might let me know-I'm thinkin' o' getting vaccinated!

THE TACTLESS ONE.

"Will one collar be enough, madam?"

"Young man! Are you insinuatin' that I've got more than one 'usband!'

a drainpipe in his Sunday suit? "But you nivver know when you've got wimmin, mister. Just to humour the old lady, I borrored a ladder (I ain't a good hand at drainpipes, mister), and clumb up to her winder to give her a bit of a serenade, though I had no intention of carrying her down. She hasn't got Nazimova's figure and the ladder wasn't mine. While I was getting my breath before I bust into my serenade, she puts her head out of the winder.

"'Whatever are you doing?'she sez.

"'Serenading you,' I sez.
"'At your age,' she sniffs. you've nowt better to do---'

"'All right,' I sez, with dignity, 'not another sixpence will I spend at the Pictures. I'm through with Romance. Just lemme get down-

"' Wait a bit,' she sez; 'now you've got the ladder, you might as well clean the spoutings out.'

"That's what Romance comes to in the end, mister."

PRECOCITY.

FOND MOTHER: Just think! Little Percival is beginning to talk. He's learning to recite. "Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?"

Proud Father: No! Does he say all that?

MOTHER: Not all of it as yet. But he's got as far as "baa, baa!"

PRECISION.

"What is your gross income?"

"No gross income. I have a net income. I'm a fish dealer."

THE SECRET.

"Он dear, I feel so miserable."

"What's the matter, dear?"

"Miss Gabby told me a secret and I can't remember what it was."



A USE FOR EVERYTHING.

YOUNG COLLECTOR (who has been brusquely refused): Give us yer 'at for the guy then, guv'nor?

DOTAGE.

BEN: So your engagement to Eva is off. And I thought she doted on you.

JOE: Yes, she did. But her father proved to be an antidote.

JUST ONE KIND.

SHE: Now tell the truth, do you men like talkative women as well as you like the others?

HE: What others?

ALL OVER.

Lady of the House (hearing the sound of crockery crashing on the kitchen floor): Lena! What are you doing?

LENA: Nothing, ma'am: it's done.

WELCOME ASSISTANCE.

LANDLORD: I've just come to tell you I'm going to raise your rent.

TENANT: Great! I can't ever do it myself.



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A SPOT OF GOSSIP.

"Where do literary people lunch?" asked

"Soho," I replied promptly. "But why this curiosity?"

"One must lunch in the right places. But

"What is wrong with the Carlton, the Ritz,

"Nothing," she assured me; "but if literary London lunches in Soho, I must."

She sighed—just a suspicion of a sigh.

"Why this desire," I asked, "to mix with the literary crowd?"

at least read. It is the first thing to which the tired City worker and the harassed housekeeper turn. It unlocks the door to Romance. It brings the night life of the Metropolis to the suburban hearth. It——"
"Say no more," I interrupted. "You are

running a gossip column."

"However did you guess? I am 'Lady Lucia ' of Town Topics.'

"Then let us reverse."

"But why?"

"Soho is not your destination. We lunch at the Savoy grill, afterwards at the Carlton, followed by the Ritz."



COMPANIONS IN MISFORTUNE.

VICAR: Well, I am going to give you something in spite of my convictions. TRAMP: Don't let that worry you, sir, I've had lots of 'em myself.

"Haven't you heard?" she demanded, "I belong to it.

. "Have you written a novel?" I inquired. "Tell me the title and I will order it from my circulating library at once."

"Everybody writes a novel," she retorted. "It comes so much cheaper than wild oats. One does not mention novels nowadays. One lives them down."

"Then you have written reminiscences?"

· "Not yet."

" A poem ? "

"I couldn't."

"Poems are much easier since rbyme went out of fashion along with reason. Almost anyone can write vers libre."

"I would not dream of vers libre. My stuff is

"Three lunches are too much. Even a schoolboy would have to draw the line at two."

"If her copy is to be believed, a gossip writer can manage five. A tiring life. But not so tiring at this time of the year. A month or two earlier you would have followed your five lunches with a bathe at Deauville, a round at Gleneagles, dinner at two or three places. Then you would have had to assist at the first night of the latest Wallace-"

"What is that?" she interrupted.

"The Beaker, or something like that, followed by one of his little supper parties. After which, night clubs and a few dances. I have," I added, "omitted tea, cocktail, and pyjama parties, charity matinées, flag days, and lectures by Colonial Bishops-





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"It isn't a bit like that," she hastened to explain.

"I thought not," I confessed.

"One edits," she added with a graceful

"I see," I agreed. "One says 'Let there be

gossip,' and there is gossip."

"Something like that," she assented. "Only it's terribly difficult to get the right stuff."

"We should get it at the Savoy grill."

"Yes, a spot does make so much difference to one's lunch."

"Pardon," I said, "I was referring to the gossip we might pick up."

"What a bore!" she exclaimed.

"Then why," I asked, "are you doing this?

"I am glad Lady V. appreciates you."

"She doesn't," she retorted. "And she hasn't written the paragraph yet. But she will."

"How do you know this?" I inquired.
"Do be clever," she urged. "Hundreds of kind paragraphs will be written about me as soon as it leaks out that I am 'Lady Lucia' of Town Topics. It is a secret at present."

"I will spread the glad tidings abroad."

"Thanks so much. I think," she added gratefully, "Pil let you take me to lunch for that."

"I thought you would. And we'll have a

" Of Grand Marnier?" she interrupted.

"Of gossip," I insisted.



THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.

MASTER: Smith, who signed Magna Charta? SMITH: Er-r K-King Alfred, wasn't it, sir? MASTER: Don't ask me, I'm asking you. SMITH: Well, I don't know either, sir!

Is your husband in the hands of the Official Receiver?"

"I don't think so. He hasn't complainedat least, not more than usual."

"Then if you are not doing this for money, why are you doing it?"

"One must express oneself," she argued. "Besides, everybody is editing a Gossip Column."

"And if everybody is writing gossip, who is to read it?"

"We read each other's," Betty replied. "One cannot, obviously, write about oneself. But it is nice, after I have dished up a charming paragraph about Lady V., to turn up the gossip page of the Sunday Sunbeam to see what Lady V. says about me."

FIRST FLIRT: Can you remember the first boy you ever kissed?

SECOND FLIRT: My dear, I can't even remember the last one.

"Он, Frank, baby has swallowed the ink. What shall I do?"

"Write with a pencil, dear," replied the professor.

FLAPPER (on being asked for a kiss): Have you ever kissed a girl before?

Suffor: Good gracious no, never.

FLAPPER: That's all right then. I hate men who kiss—and tell.



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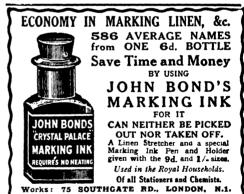
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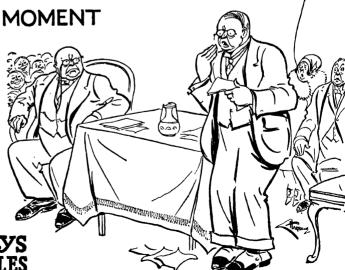
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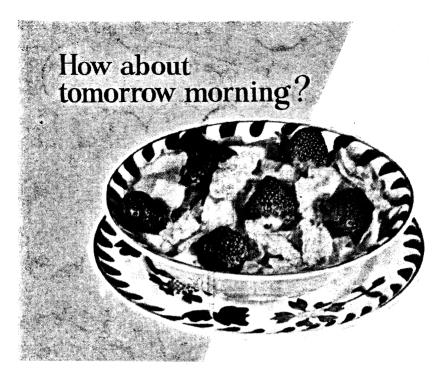
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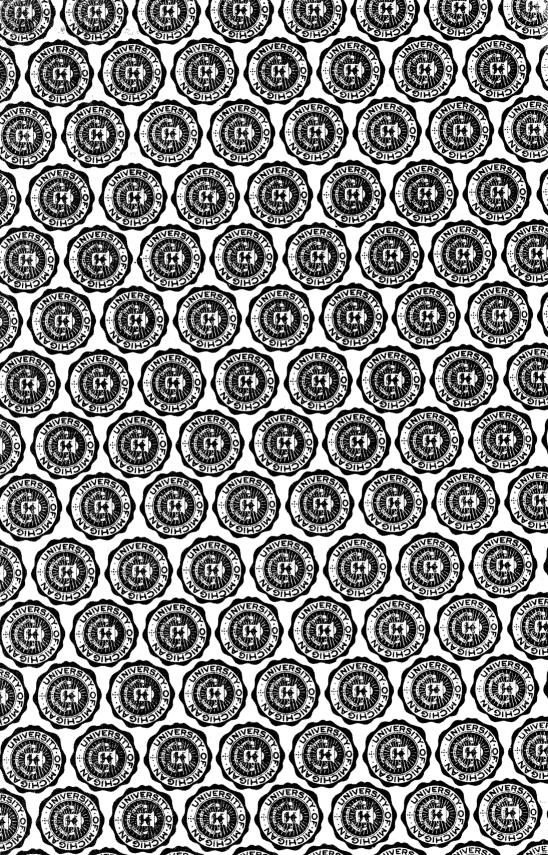
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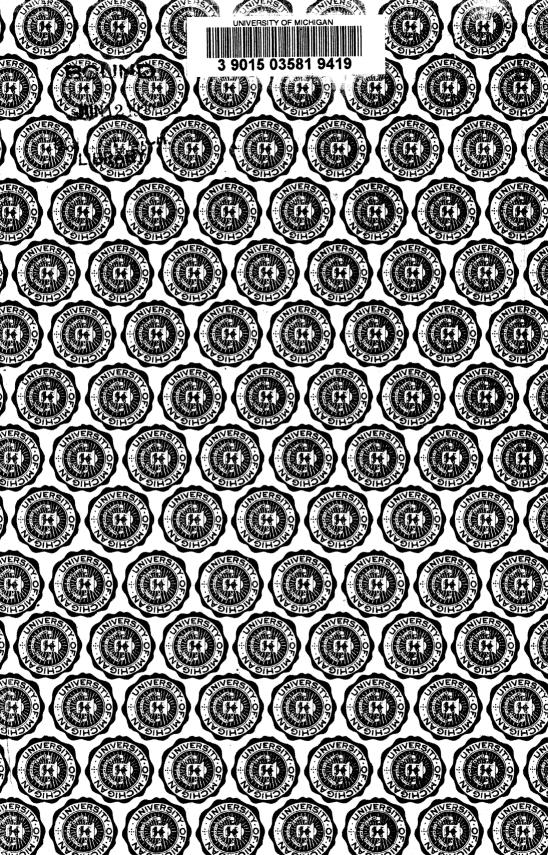
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